MORAL LEADERSHIP

LEIGHTON PARKS

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MORAL LEADERSHIP

AND OTHER SERMONS

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BY

LEIGHTON PARKS

RECTOR OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH, NEW YORK

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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To

THE CONGREGATION

OF

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH, NEW YORK

THESE SERMONS ARE

GRATEFULLY AND RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATED

PREFACE

To-day brings to a close ten years of a happy ministry as Rector of St. Bartholomew's Church, and I thought I might be permitted to commemorate it by gathering together ten sermons — the same number as the years. Which to choose of the hundreds I have preached was a task I did not care to undertake. The simplest way seemed the best. The ten last sermons I have preached are here printed. With the exception of the last, all are from the stenographic notes made at the time of their delivery. They lack the literary finish that the printed page presupposes, but it may be that in this rough form they will accomplish their purpose—serve as a memorial of plain speech from a loving heart.

L. P.

St. Bartholomew's Rectory,
February 1st, 1914.

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I

MARANATHA

"Maran-atha."—I Cor. 16 : 22.

Something like the thrill which the geologist experiences when he uncovers the strata in which is embedded the fossil of animal or plant long extinct, or the more familiar experience that some of you here have had when walking in Rome along the Via Sacra you said to yourself, "On these very stones where I stand tribunes and consuls, emperors and conquerors, martyrs and apostles have trod," the student of the Bible feels when, turning over the familiar pages, he comes upon this mysterious word "Maranatha."

The punctuation of our King James version has obscured the meaning of the word. It is a part of a text: "If any

man love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema, Maranatha." We have assumed that Maranatha simply adds to the force of the mysterious curse "Anathema," but it has nothing to do with it. The verse should read: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be accursed (leave him to his fate).* Maran-atha."

It is an Aramaic word, a part of that dialect or patois which our Saviour spoke, and is one of the few words contained in the Greek New Testament that show us what that speech was. They who ought to know tell us that this was the word the early Christians in Palestine spoke to one another at the end of the Lord's Supper. So just as the word "Mass" spread all over the mediæval world as the title of the Communion Service, in the Palestinian Churches of old the Communion might have been called the "Maran-

* See Rev. 22 : 11.

atha." The word means: "Our Lord is near." It is the key to the Bible. From the very beginning, in the story of Eden, when the Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the evening, until the Book of Revelation, where the soul is asked to sit down at a supper with God, there is the revelation of the nearness of God to man.

So I would ask you this morning to think with me for a little while of the influence of that great thought upon Paul, and the men and women to whom he wrote his letters. Of course this nearness of the Lord took a form which you and I cannot appreciate to-day. The immediate expectation, on the part of the early Christians, of the passing away of all the things that are seen, the sun and moon and stars and earth, and then the reappearance in physical form of Jesus, who had walked the hills of Galilee, led them to say to themselves, "He may come

to-day." "Our Lord is near." Without that divine illusion I do not see how they could have lived. It was because they thought that any day the end would come that their thought of life and time and the experiences of life was changed.

First of all their thought of what we call the world; it has a great hold upon us, it seems to us that the things we see, from the familiar furniture of the room to the pyramids of history, must be the real things. The things we hear, from the child's prattle to the sublimest symphony; the things we touch, from our own bodies to the sun and moon and stars which we now can weigh—these seem to us the real things, and that is what they seemed to Paul and the men and women to whom he wrote, until they began to say to themselves, "Maranatha." Then, with that expectation of the immediate passing away of all the things that the senses apprehend, they could never

feel about them as they once had felt, as you and I feel; no more could they seem the real things. The real thing is life, and not the things that surround life.

And this was not merely a vague feeling about the things that they touched and saw—it entered into the deepest experience of their lives and affected their value of property. Paul says in one of his letters: "I know how to be rich (that is, I have been in my day rich), I know how to be poor. It is an indifferent thing whether I am rich or poor. I used to think that life consisted in the abundance of the things that a man possesses. I now know that it has nothing to do with the things that he possesses. I experience, and you men and women to whom I write experience, life and joy and hope; can the richest man in Corinth have more than that? The poorest man in Corinth may have these things;" therefore the things that seem to us so important were not

important to them. They had only a secondary value. They had learned, because of the nearness of their Lord, to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness first, sure that God would give them what he knew they needed for the little time that remained. They only prayed for bread for "to-day" or "to-morrow."

The second thing that this faith produced in these men and women was this: they came to understand the meaning of pleasure and pain. The history of the world might be written on those two words, pleasure and pain. As soon as the animal life appeared on earth we see it first searching here for the luscious food and the refreshing drink and the satisfaction of all the animal appetites, and then turning, rushing away, because out of the dark jungle some enemy approached. Running after pleasure, fleeing from pain is the natural life of man. It is the life

of many men and women in this city to-day. We all have known it. Paul was lifted far above it all. He did not look on pain as the Stoic did, saying to himself: "I can endure all the gods can send and from my quivering lips they will never wring a cry." No, not at all; the man suffered from an incurable disease. He had before him a great work to which he felt he had been called by God. The awful pain that he endured hindered him from accomplishing this work, and in agony and sweat he prayed God to save him from it, and God would not answer his prayer. "Then," said Paul, "I came to understand the meaning of that pain. I besought the Lord that it might depart from me, but he said to me, 'My grace, my strength, my peace, my joy, my love is all you need, and in your pain and in your weakness the power and glory of God may be seen.' Then," says Paul, "I am *glad* I am in pain, I am glad I

suffer, if by suffering the glory of my God can be revealed in my life." You have known men and women who have gone through that experience, who have prayed to be relieved of their sickness and suffering, and then have known that patience and cheerfulness and sweetness and unselfishness, which came in and through the pain, were better than any of the pleasures of life.

And the last thing that this great faith did for these men and women was to change their conception of death. The world had been dominated by its fear of death; the spirit had been broken by the certainty of death. Now Paul said: "It is an insignificant thing when all is said." You cannot turn over any one of the Epistles without seeing how differently those men and women thought about death from the way in which we at least are tempted to think of it. All along there had been in humanity a vague hope

that somehow it was not the end. Like the words of *Lear* when he thinks *Cordelia* is not really dead:

"She lives! if it be so,
It is a chance that does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt."*

But with Paul there was no "if," there was no "chance." Jesus Christ was the revelation of the everlasting yea of God. The Son of God can no more die than God can die. Those who are one with the Son of God can never die, and what Paul was preaching all along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea was at last embodied in that sublime Gospel of John at Ephesus, seventy years perhaps after the death of our Saviour. In the great story of Lazarus' death and Jesus' communion with his stricken sisters, John embodied the great thought into which the Church at last had entered. "Lord, if thou hadst

* "King Lear," Act V, Scene III.

been here my brother had not died." How pathetic is that lament which must have been repeated by hundreds who had heard of Jesus' mighty works. "If he still walked this earth, the brother, the sister, the mother, wife, or child would not have died." But every Lord's Supper said, "'Maran-atha,"' Our Lord is near. They have not died—He who is near is the resurrection and the life. "Whosoever believeth in him can never die." They had a privilege that Martha and Mary never had. In that day there must have been times when he could not be with them; now he is near every stricken life.

Now let us ask ourselves what was the ground of their faith? Sometimes it is thought that it was the continuation of the influence that had gone out from Jesus' earthly life, and that they had a great advantage over us because they were nearer to Palestine than we are. But they were not. Really you and I

are nearer to the earthly life of Jesus than were these men and women in Corinth centuries ago. We know more about the country than they did; we know more about the details of Jesus' life than they did; we know more about the conditions under which He lived and worked than they did—we really are nearer to Him than they were.

Or we say: "It was this illusion, this expectation of the passing away of all things and the coming of Christ and the snatching up in the air of those who still lived, to be with Christ, that gave them their faith." Not at all; that is to misread the whole story. The form their faith took was inevitable, and you and I cannot reproduce it nor enter into that atmosphere, nor is it necessary; because you and I have a larger and a deeper thought of the coming of Christ than those men and women had of old, because we know that it is no physical reappear-

ance—it is the recurring consciousness of a spiritual presence that stands near us and is our dearest friend.

No, it was no accident of time or place, it was no confusion about the meaning of the world. Their faith was based on a living, daily experience.

They *thought*. They stopped drifting and thought about the meaning of life, and as they thought they had an experience that almost every man and woman has had, perhaps over and over again. Husband and wife, parent and child, lovers and friends,—you sit and think deeply of something and the one nearest to you suddenly speaks and anticipates the word you were about to speak. Who has not had that experience? Who has not had it over and over again? Something like this was the experience of these men and women. They thought about the meaning of life, and it was as if some one standing beside them spoke and in-

terpreted life to them, so that, with no boasting but in the simplest way imaginable, they began to say: "We have the mind of Christ. He is so near that we know what He thinks of life and death, and what He thinks we think."

They *prayed*, and here in joy they passed beyond the experience of him who is preaching, and of many of you who hear. And yet there is something in that experience that even the simplest and the most commonplace amongst us may know. We cannot express it in the great words that Paul used, nor would Paul use those words if he were alive to-day. He said: "We know not how to pray, but the spirit helpeth our infirmities, making intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered, and the prayer of the spirit which *we feel but cannot formulate*, God hears and grants because it is 'according to the will of God.' "

I say that few can enter into the mean-

ing of that deep experience, and yet there is something in it that every one who has ever earnestly prayed knows. The prayer may have begun with a definite, earnest petition for some particular thing, an individual private prayer, and in the praying we have felt ourselves borne along and upward into a great longing for the fulfilment of the will of God. "O let that be done no matter what happens to me"—this is the universal spiritual prayer; it becomes your prayer, because the Lord is the Spirit and He has been near you, as He was near Paul.

And lastly, they *lived* and showed their love by sitting down together, rich and poor, old and young, wise and foolish, at God's table and found that Christ fed them and Christ refreshed them. They came away from that Love Feast knowing that the Lord had been near. No wonder that they ended the solemn service with "Maran-atha." It is the secret

of life. God grant that according to our needs and in and through our daily experience of pain and in the affairs of life, in thought, in prayer, in love, and in death, you and I may be lifted into that atmosphere of life and joy and peace which can only be because our Lord is near.

II

MORAL LEADERSHIP

"He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."—St. John 20:22–23.

It was my privilege last Sunday to speak to some of you of what is called the mystic aspect of the religion of Jesus,—the communion of the soul with God. I know that there are some of you here to whom such an appeal meant more than it could mean to your preacher, but there were no doubt some to whom it meant very little. They say: "We are not mystics, and when the religion of Jesus is placed before us as a mystical experience there is no response in mind or heart." Well, let it be so. We cannot all be poets, we cannot all be scholars, we

cannot all be philosophers, but we can all be good men and women, and so to-day I want to speak to you of the ethical aspect of religion. I take my text from the Gospel of John, the 20th chapter at the 23d verse. "And he breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

First, to whom were these words spoken? The Greek Church, the Roman Catholic Church, a very large number of clergy and laity in our own Church say: "These words were spoken to the Apostles and Christ was giving to them the official power to forgive sins and to bind sins upon the human conscience. A power which they, in their turn, transmitted to their successors in office." Two things I will remark. Thomas was not present, therefore, according to this theory Thomas seems to have been excluded from the

Apostolic gift. But there is another question, the question that men and women are asking about everything to-day. Does it work? Has it been found that in those countries where that theory held sway the moral life has been nobler and holier than in those countries where that theory was utterly repudiated?

As I understand it, and as many good men and women understand it, this was not a power given to the ten Apostles alone who were present. It is said distinctly that it was given when the disciples were assembled together—disciples, men and women, the Church. It was the revelation of the moral leadership of Christ's Church that was being declared in these words of the risen Lord. The moral leadership of the Christian Church, so that the Church should be able to lift off of men the burden of sin and the Church should be able to bind the heavy burden of sin upon men's consciences un-

til they cried out for the relief of the living God.

Before we come to consider what this means in our own day, in this city, in this congregation, I think we should do well to recall what it meant to the Church in the past. That I think might help to an understanding of the Church's present duty and privilege.

There are two great moments in the history of the Christian Church when the consciousness of this great power, the result of breathing in the Spirit of God, manifested itself in the life of the Church. The first was in what we call the conversion of the Roman Empire. And of course that does not mean what the later conversions of some of the Germanic tribes meant—the mere baptism and change of name of those people so that whereas heretofore they had been called Heathen or Arian, now they were called Christians or Catholics. Not at all. The

conversion of the Roman Empire means the conversion of the moral ideal, and the change in the moral life of the men and women who lived in the great cities and towns and on the scattered farms of the Roman Empire.

Of course there is always the danger that besets the controversialist, to paint his opponent in too black colors, and perhaps this has been done. Therefore, I will avoid all temptation to exaggerate the state of the case morally before the disciples of Jesus Christ began to go through the great cities and the villages and tell their story of the ideal life that they had seen and touched and handled and knew—showing that they were near to God.

What sort of a life was it these people to whom they went were living? Well, take from your library shelf this afternoon Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," and read over that

great 15th chapter. Disregard the cynicism, and overlook the fat complacency and remember that you are hearing a prejudiced witness, a man who neither understood the Christian Church nor loved it, but did love to tell the truth, and had a knowledge of that ancient time that probably has never been surpassed, perhaps never equalled. Read what that man unwillingly admits was the result of the spreading of the Christian influence over that great empire—how the lives of multitudes of men and women were changed by this thing. For, as he sneeringly remarks, the greatest advances at first were made among the vilest people, some of whom had been murderers and escaped the executioner, many of whom had been prostitutes on the streets of the great cities; some of whom were thieves, others adulterers.

Or listen to another witness, not hostile as is Gibbon, but certainly not prejudiced.

Lecky, in the 3rd chapter of his great work on European Morals, says: "The chief cause of its (Christianity's) success was the congruity of its teaching with the spiritual nature of mankind. It was because it was true to the moral sentiments of the age, because it represented faithfully the supreme type of excellence to which men were then tending, because it corresponded with their religious wants, aims, and emotions, because the whole spiritual being could then expand and expatiate under its influence, that it planted its roots so deeply in the hearts of men. One great cause of its success was that it produced more heroic actions and formed more upright men than any other creed."

There was no vile life in the cities of Corinth, of Ephesus, or Alexandria, or of Rome to whom the disciples who had received the Holy Spirit did not go and declare that by the grace of God every sin

could be forgiven, and a man could start afresh, and a woman who had been down in the mire of the city might walk with uplifted face in the glory of God. What a revelation! What a tremendous message this was, and they believed it because it answered to the deepest longings of their spiritual nature, and thus became our spiritual ancestors. The Church forgave their sins and brought them to baptism, and said: "This outward and visible sign of washing witnesses to an inward reality. God's Spirit will heal your poor, sick, shameful, defiled soul, and it will stand up in the new life revealed by God."

This went on in every city and in every hamlet, and wherever the messengers of the Church came. But in addition to these evident sins which all men condemn, which the philosophers condemned as well as the Apostles, but had no suggestion as to how they were to be left behind and a new life begun, I say in addition to these

there were other sins that lay heavy on the consciences of men and women who had not sunk into the degradation of which I have been speaking. For instance, it is difficult for you and me to imagine it, but it was a real difficulty to the Jew who felt the beauty and the power of the life of Jesus, and desired to become his disciple. Instantly he was beset by a difficulty that was ingrained in his religious nature—the eating of meat that had been offered to idols. It was the custom in the market to offer a certain portion of the meat that was brought in from the country to an idol, and the Jew came there to buy that meat; or the Jew went to a dinner party and he did not know but what the meat that was set before him had been contaminated by being offered to an idol. To you and me it seems an imaginary sin—it was a very real one to the Jew, and the Christian Church lifted it off his conscience and said

to him: "You are a free man because you are a brother of the Son of man, and he has shown that there is nothing common or unclean. You have no reason to fear because the meat has been offered to an idol."

And then there were the sins that lay on the conscience of the Heathen. They said to themselves: "It is all very well for these people who live in cities, but for us Pagans, country people, who are ever near to Nature, it is a serious matter if we neglect the gods. The rising river will overflow the farm, the earthquake will destroy our little hamlet, the sudden burst of hail in the summer time will ruin the harvest. There are many who say that these things come because we no longer sacrifice to the old gods." And the Church went amongst those people preaching the unity of God, laying the foundation (though they little guessed it, and little cared) of all the modern sci-

entific conception of this universe as a place of order which no demons can interfere with. The sin, that is, the sense of sin, lying heavy on the conscience because the idols had been neglected, with its consequent fear of the hatred of the gods, was gradually lifted by the Christian Church.

Now in addition to this remission of sins they bound sins upon people. There were many things that respectable men and women were doing, and their conscience did not trouble them at all, but the Church made their conscience trouble them, and that is the meaning of the binding of sin. Neither the Church nor any other organization can, since we have the Gospels in our hands, put arbitrary sins upon you and me, but the Church can and did in the past, and may in the future, reveal to your conscience and mine that which heretofore we have never thought of as a sin. For instance, one of the most terrible things in the social life of the

latter days of the Empire was the disgust with children. They were a nuisance. They were a weariness, and the girls were simply an expense and a danger.* And therefore all over that Empire children, and above all girl babies, were exposed to the elements, to the wild beasts, to die, and apparently nobody's conscience was troubled. If the mother felt the maternal pang as the infant, that she never should see again, was drawn from her breast, nobody paid any attention to that. There was no conscience that objected till Christian men and women came and said: "But that little child belongs to God," and they baptized it. They baptized infants wherever they found them. They put the sign of the cross on them, they

* As these words were spoken, a little girl who had taken off her hat and leaned her head against her father's breast, encircled by his arm, looked up at him with a smile as much as to say: "Did you ever hear anything as silly as that?" I saw an illustration of a new life. Children had once been endured, now they are adored.

branded them as a part of Christ's flock, and slowly it came to pass that men and women said to themselves, "This thing is a sin," and it ceased.

Another thing they did and nobody thought it was a sin—to hold slaves. Nobody thought it was a sin if the slave ran away and his master was convinced that he no longer could get any more work out of him if the master killed the slave—the way you sometimes feel about a horse that has run away—you are at liberty to kill him.

The Church did not begin a social revolution and attempt to overthrow the whole structure that was built on slavery, but they asked the master and his slave to sit down together at the Table while somebody served, and they told them that the unseen servant was Jesus Christ. And from that day slowly, very slowly, the sin of slavery, the holding of the brother in bondage came to be felt to be wrong.

The Church bound that upon the conscience of the world.

And the same thing took place in the gladiatorial shows. Why, when a country had been conquered and strong men had been taken captive, should they not be taken to Rome, to the Colosseum, to be devoured by wild beasts, while the élite of Rome drank the blood of the beast and the man with shrieks of delight? The Church said: "There is no such thing as Barbarian or Scythian—we are all one in Jesus Christ." And, just as once no one would have thrown a Roman citizen into the arena just because he belonged to the Eternal City, so the day came when no one would throw any man or woman to the lions because they belonged to the City of God. It was very slow, but it was very sure. They forgave sins and they bound sins—they were the moral leaders of the world.

The second great moment of which I

would speak is what is known as the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Then the same thing went on. In the first place the Church, that part of it which had begun to receive the Spirit of Christ, began to forgive sins. The whole machinery of pardon had broken down. Men and women had been doing everything that the priesthood said they ought to do, and as a result they had lost their money and had gotten no peace of conscience. Conscience would not let them alone, and they began to ask themselves: "Why is it that when I have done everything that I have been told to do I cannot find peace to my soul?"

And the men and women who had received the Spirit of Christ in the sixteenth century, said, the reason is this: "You haven't enough to pay God for what you have done, but God in His infinite love has paid for you. You are as foolish as the workman who week by week brings

up his penny to pay the debt he can never pay, and then finds that it has been paid by him to whom it was due. The Cross of Christ," said these men, "is the witness that the debt, whatever it is, has been paid. No one of you could pay it, no one of you need try to pay it. All you need to do is to receive God's assurance that the debt is cancelled, and that now you can live with a free conscience as His child, trying to do the will of God." That lifted the burden of sin off the consciences of multitudes, and they began life all over again.

Then, in addition to this one particular forgiving of sins (and I cannot speak of many others because of want of time), let us think of other sins the Church lifted off the consciences of men and women. First, it lifted off the sin of marriage. The Church had been saying, or rather the officials had been saying, for centuries, that marriage was a mere concession to the

animal life, and that the noblest spiritual life was free from all family ties. Now came these men and women, who had received the Spirit of Christ in the sixteenth century, and said: "The holiest life on earth is the life of a pure man and a pure woman in marriage."

They lifted off the conscience the sin of marriage, and revealed marriage as God's appointed way for the fulfilment and sanctification of human life. The holy family took the place of the sexless priest.

They lifted from the conscience the sin of reading the Bible. It is true that many more Bibles were distributed before the Reformation than we used to think. It is true that a good many people were reading the Bible before the Reformation; but this is also true: that the officials of the Church were opposed to any reading of the Bible except under the direction of the priest. The Reformers lifted the ban and said: "Read your Bible for yourself

when and where you will, and God will reveal Himself unto you plain men and women just as He revealed Himself to the men and women who wrote the book." Need I go on? I have only begun to touch the fringe of this subject, and yet here we must leave it. The Church, when it has been filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, has felt first of all the moral responsibility for the conditions of the world in which it lives; and secondly: the Church, when it has been filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, has had a sublime faith in the response of human nature to the revelation of the Divine Life.

I have been speaking all along of what the "Church" has done. This includes various activities and many agencies. It might be by a council as at Jerusalem, or by the prince of the Apostles, Peter, or the "least of the Apostles," Paul, or by Bishops or Doctors or Preachers or Evangelists—but the real though unseen

work of forgiveness and condemnation was the work of obscure men and women. This was true in the conversion of the Empire, and in the Reformation. The great mountain peaks lifted high above the plain are named and honored, but it is the mountain range that forms the watershed and affects the climate. It is the Church, the whole company of Christian people who change the world's atmosphere in any age. It is to them we must turn to-day.

III

MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

"Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."—St. John 20 : 23.

It was my privilege to speak to you last Sunday of these same words, and we thought of the way in which the Church had realized the moral leadership of the world, first in the forgiving and secondly in the binding of sins upon men's consciences in the great moment called the conversion of the Roman Empire. In the sixteenth century also we saw how godly men and women lifted off of the consciences of men and women the burden of sin which the officials of the Church had bound upon them. But time did not permit us to go on and think of the way

in which those same men and women bound heavily the burden of sin upon the Church, which led to the reformation of the Roman Catholic Church itself.

To-day I want to remind you, first of all, that those two great moments do not exhaust the experience of the Church. There has never been a generation where this work has not been called for, and there never has been a generation where this work has not been done by the Church. In the first generation of Christians it was done officially by the Council of Jerusalem, which lifted a burden from conscience and laid a burden upon conscience. In the twelfth century it was done by St. Francis, the great layman, the great absolver of sin,—the man who also laid the burden of godless riches and enervating luxury so heavy upon the conscience that men and women could no longer bear it. It was done again in the eighteenth century by John Wesley, when he lifted off

the burden of great and heavy sins, and laid again the burden of sins upon the consciences of others who thought themselves righteous. It has been done in the nineteenth century by the Salvation Army. There has never been a generation that has been without it.

Now this morning we want to ask ourselves, what is the need of it now? And if we followed the logical order we should consider first what are the sins that the Church ought to lift off the consciences of men, and secondly, what are the sins that the Church ought to bind upon them. But I have thought it best to leave to next Sunday the consideration of what sins we ought to try to lift, and to ask you to think with me this morning about some sins that we ought to try to bind. And as much as I dislike to do it, I intend to talk to you about a question everybody is talking and reading about, everybody is flocking to see represented upon the stage—I

mean the sex relation of men and women.

Twenty years ago I said to a man whose moral judgment I greatly value: "It seems to me that the increasing divorces in this country must lead ultimately to the dissolution of society." But he said: "Not so. The difficulty to-day is not that there are too many divorces, but that there are too few." I do not think he would say that to-day, for there are some states in which there is one divorce to every twelve marriages, and other states where it is asserted (though I am not certain, and will not insist upon it) that the proportion is even greater.

Now the first difficulty in dealing with this whole matter is that the Church itself is not clear in its judgment. It is not clear officially. Individual members, you and I who are here, are not clear about it because there are so many different things that are contained in this one word, "divorce," that it is difficult to form a

judgment. For instance, take this case, and it can be duplicated, yes and more than duplicated, by experiences that some of you here this morning know. Here, we may say, is a girl who has married a man in good faith, and finds that he was physically unfit to be married, intemperate, a gambler, he does not support her, he abuses her, he calls on her to get support from her family, and at last suggests that there is some other man who would provide what is needed. Is there any good man or woman who would say that she ought to remain under those conditions? Is there father or mother who would say that the daughter ought to submit herself to the wandering lusts of such a creature? None. Can it be the mind of Christ that she should continue in that state? I believe not. But when you ask me to go further and say that that being the case the woman is at liberty, after the court has relieved her from her

legal obligation, to marry again, I find myself in conflict with the Church of which I am a minister. It says yes, I say no. But it is not my purpose to discuss that—that is another matter—I merely call your attention to it to show that there are cases where, in the judgment of all good men and women, divorces are justifiable.

We will take another case. Here, we will say, is a man who has married and soon become dissatisfied with his wife. He removes to Nevada, he sets up a fictitious residence, he complains to the judge that his wife has abandoned him, which means that she would not go out to the West with him to get a divorce. He is set free, he returns here to this community and he marries a young woman with whom, as the English servants say, he "had been keeping company," and then all is as it should be, and nobody is to blame!

What is to be the end of this thing, my friends? For between those two extremes of justifiable divorce and fraud there are great numbers of cases which cannot be put in either category. Divorce has been made easy, and in my judgment, because it has been made easy, advantage has been taken of it. Women are not obliged now to go so far as Nevada, They can go to the State of Maine (be it said to the shame of New England) and can get a divorce from a man against whom they have not one charge to utter. They have tired of him and have seen some other man that they want to live with. Yet these people return here and expect to be received as respectable people. What is your opinion on that subject?

Now some one will say: "You will never be able to deal with this question of divorce until you have first dealt with the question of marriage. It is not di-

vorce—it is marriage that is the disease." This is not a new thing, of course; the new thing about it is that while it has been uttered by irresponsible and often disreputable people, it has now been uttered by responsible people. If such things are published in the muck-raking magazines or in the yellow journals, certainly the pulpit would not be justified in calling the attention of respectable people to them; but when we have published in one of the representative magazines of this country, the *Atlantic Monthly*, an article by one of the leaders of the Feminist Movement, as it is called, in England, and when that article is reproduced, as I am told it has been, in such a paper as the *New York Times*, then it seems to me it is time for us to ask ourselves what is our judgment upon such utterances.

What is it that is said? It is said that the real trouble with modern life is that it has outgrown marriage, that marriage

is simply a survival of slavery, and that there will never be peace and happiness in the family life until it is recognized that woman should not be economically dependent upon her husband. She must be set free to have her own independent income, and not be called upon to ask her husband whenever she wishes money to spend. Until that is reached, say these leaders, there can be no peace in the family. This is an economical question with which I have nothing to do, and I will not discuss it.

I pass to the second point, which is this: Marriage is a survival of slavery inasmuch as it binds the woman forever to one man, and in the nature of the case (we will not say in the large majority, but in a very large number of cases) that becomes a burden that it is impossible for a woman to bear. And what is the solution? What is the solution?—it is this: that instead of two people standing be-

fore the altar of God and there solemnly promising to take one another "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death parts them," *the woman shall now be given her true place in society, and instead of waiting for a man to come and ask her to marry him, shall choose a mate temporarily in order that he may beget by her a child, and when that function has been accomplished, the woman, being economically independent, will continue her life with the child and the man will disappear, and of course the number of mates will depend upon fancy.**

* See "The Feminist Movement," *Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1913. Whoever reads that shocking article should also read Mr. E. S. Martin's ironical treatment of the same subject in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January, 1914, and also the virile pronouncement of Professor William T. Sedgwick, professor of biology in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in the *New York Times*, Sunday, January 18th, 1914. Not a few readers will question whether there is the intimate connection between the Feminist Movement and Women's Suffrage that Professor Sedgwick insists upon. But whatever may be the reader's opinion on that subject, the biological aspect of the Feminist Movement deserves careful consideration. I would especially

Now what I would ask is this: Have any of those people who talk in this way, or have you, having read this argument, and wondered in your minds whether there was anything in it, have they ever talked to a woman who had tried it? Well, I have, and not to one or two. I have talked face to face with women who have done just this thing only to find that it was a ghastly failure. Some one may say: "It is a failure because public opinion has not been educated to the point where it justifies it.

recommend to those persons who feel that plain speaking on such a fundamental subject as sex relation should not be made from the pulpit the last paragraph of Professor Sedgwick's article:

"But, meanwhile, where are the Churches? Time was when they would have spoken with no uncertain sound, but to-day they stand too often dumb, if not deaf, before the rising tempest that threatens their destruction. The epoch calls for plain speech, for the taking of sides, for simple, old-fashioned morality, for pure religion and undefiled. Those who are not with us in the battle for the conservation of womanhood, of home, of family, of morality, and of decency are against us, and against those things which make human life sweet and really worth living."

If that were done then the woman would not feel the pressure of public opinion, and her conscience would not trouble her." Well, that is a fine view of human nature, and it shows the deepest insight into cases of conscience! Why, my friends, all that public opinion can do in such a case is to delay the activity of conscience, and the proof of that can be shown, if I were at liberty to cite cases, which I am not—cases of women who have done this thing, and nobody in the community knew it but the man and the minister to whom she came when the burden became too heavy to bear. It was not public opinion that has driven such a woman to confession. What was it? It was this: The awakening of the Christian consciousness of that woman which has been teaching us, through all these centuries since Jesus walked the hills of Galilee, that the body is a sacrament, and when it is not used sacramentally it is sacrilege. The con-

science awakes to that fact and then knows that the door is shut and the life of love and peace is lost.

Some people talk, and some allow themselves to be influenced by such talk, as if marriage were slavery. Why, of course there are marriages that are slavery, but there are unmarried lives that are the lives of slaves. I have in mind a girl I married eighteen years ago, who has just come home from burying her only child. How fine it would be if she had chosen a temporary mate and now were free to choose again! Not so—she is standing hand in hand with the man who loves her, and together they are waiting for the comfort of God.

What is the Church, what are we to do about the state of affairs that exists to-day amongst people we know? Well, it is evident that the first thing that is necessary for a dispassionate judgment is an atmosphere of calm. Now I ask, is that

atmosphere being produced by the reading of novels, the whole purpose of which is to show that conditions are so unfavorable to virtue that it would be miraculous if a virtuous life were lived? The novelist has all the facts in his or in her hand, and they are arranged to suit convenience. You and I have no opportunity to cross-examine witnesses—we have no opportunity to hear the other side. We get this one picture, the emotions are greatly excited, and we are asked for an immediate judgment, and we give it at the next lunch party we go to! Now that sort of thing is not conducive to a noble, holy, moral life.

Then, on the other hand, we are told: "The Church should admit the fact that it has lost the moral leadership of the world. It has passed to statesmen, to journalists, to the stage." We might ask about the statesman and the journalist: have they separated themselves from the

Church, have they been in no way influenced by the Church: But let that go. In what sense is the stage a moral leader of society to-day? The stage is naturally and properly a money-making institution. If money can be made by the production of the Oberammergau play, and some actor of disreputable life seems fitted by face or voice to act the part of the Christus, he will be cast for that part. No doubt there are many actors and actresses of unblemished life—there are also many of the vilest reputation. Of course we will be told that art cannot be trammelled by canons of morals. Well, how then can art be a moral leader? The art of acting presupposes actors, so character will inevitably appear in whatever men or women do. If they be not moral they cannot be the moral leaders. Moreover, how is the "stage" attempting to lead? What sort of plays are put upon the stage? No doubt many of sweetness and light,

but does anybody suppose that a moral judgment in regard to this matter is to be reached by the representation upon a stage of shameful physical disease? Is anybody going to be made better from hearing these things? Is it not inevitable that in the minds of pure-hearted girls there shall be planted the seed of suspicion, and instead of that fact which everybody knows is a fact being limited, these girls shall look about in the faces of the men they see and wonder if they are afflicted with this virus? Or what can be the effect upon men or women either of the exhibition on the stage of the unfortunate victim of lust? Is it not perfectly well known that the effect of those things is suggestive, and that a girl who goes to the theatre (I am not talking about you, you are sheltered in many ways) and sees that the dangers are so overwhelming is very likely to return and say to herself: "What is the use of strug-

gling? If she could not escape how can I?" It lowers the moral atmosphere and therefore renders the spiritual nature susceptible to the germs of moral disease.

Some one says: "Yes, that is a very old-fashioned way of talking, but you ought to know, everybody ought to know, that the best way of dealing with vice is to represent it as it is, and let people see what life is." My answer is that no human being dare do it. Is there any actor-manager who would dare represent on the stage the shameful house, full of drunkenness and obscenity and deformity and rotten with disease? Would anybody dare represent things as they are? No, they represent a purely imaginary picture, and you may pay your money and go and see that imaginary picture because your minds are stirred and your moral judgment is not called upon to act. I do not wish to weary you, but I want to get through with this thing, and there-

fore I will impose upon you a little longer.

Not only have we got to deal with this question of atmosphere as a preliminary to a wise judgment, but we have to remember another thing, and that is the effect upon character of motion and gesture. When you and I were little boys and girls our mothers taught us to kneel down and put our hands together and shut our eyes and say, in a very gentle voice: "Our Father who art in heaven." Now why? Why were we not told to say our prayers when we were pulling off our stockings or running round the room? Because it was perfectly well understood from experience, though the law of it was not understood, that not only is gesture the expression of the mind, but that it produces the appropriate expression upon the mind. That the new psychology is teaching. You yawn not only because you are sleepy, but you become sleepy

if you yawn. Now apply that, my friends, to dancing. How can it fail if the dance, which is a gesture that originated in a time when the animal life was predominant, and which had no object but to excite the sensual passions, accompanied by barbaric music, is indulged in—I say how can it fail that the mind shall be affected by that thing which the gesture represents? You say that that is a libel upon much of the dancing. I do not say anything at all about much of the dancing. You may call it by one or another name, but there is a philosophy back of it all, and you may use your own judgment as to the moral effect of gestures which have the vilest origin. No doubt any dance may be made vulgar, but some dances, no matter how much they may be modified, will never lose their vileness.

And one thing more. I am not going to give you the amusement of speaking to you about women's dress, but I am

going to ask you this: In your judgment as members of the Christian Church, is much of the dressing that is seen upon the streets, at dinner parties, at balls, conducive to the modesty of women, or to that reverence for them on the part of man which is the basis of true manliness? That is a thing for Christian women to decide.

Now to bring it to an end, what can we do? Well, in the first place, we can do nothing about these homes that are already destroyed. We can do nothing about these men and women who have taken these irrevocable steps—it is too late: "Ye cannot enter now," and we must even let it alone. But I am thinking about these boys and girls who are going to be the Christian Church in a very few years, and I want to know what sort of a preparation is being given them to exercise the power to remit and to bind sins, if from an early day they are accustomed

to see men and women who have violated their marriage vows and been reunited to somebody else, received in your houses and welcomed as guests, receiving the approval of your judgment upon their misspent lives?

I ask you: What is life to be as the result of all this novel-reading where the sex appeal is played with as if it were the only interest in life, and this going to the theatre to see things that St. Paul said "ought not even to be named among you as becometh saints"? Do not allow any one to be deluded by the fact that in so doing they are helping in a great moral movement. They are not helping in any moral movement. The Greeks were wiser than modern Americans on this subject of morality. The most beautiful and the most profound of all the Greek myths is the story of the slaying of Medusa, the Gorgon, by Perseus. Her face, we are told, was at once beautiful and horrible,

so that he who looked upon it was turned to stone. The hero would not look upon the face of evil. He saw it only in the shield that had been given him by Athene! Only as the servant of wisdom would he look at evil, and when he saw it reflected there he slew it. Paul, it is likely, never heard that story, but he knew the great truth that underlies it when he wrote: "Live in the spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

"Whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained," and *you* are thereby responsible.

IV

MORAL PRIVILEGE

"Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."—St. John 20 : 23.

I FELT it my duty to speak to you last Sunday of the closing words of this text, and to remind you of your responsibility as Christians to bind upon the consciences of men and women the sin of sensuality until the burden became so great that they could not bear it.

This morning I turn to the far more congenial task of reminding you of your privilege to forgive sins. "Whose soever sins ye remit, lift off, they will be lifted off." What sins you and I are to forgive covers too large a field to be considered in any one sermon. I purpose then limit-

ing the consideration to one particular sin which I think the time has come for the Christian Church to forgive. It is the sin of doubt. As I reminded you in the first sermon on this text, the sins that were originally remitted by the early Church and by the disciples in the conversion of the Roman Empire were, some of them, no sins; that is, the remission consisted in the revelation of the fact that what had been considered sin was not sin. Now we all know that no one of us can live to himself, and if the community in which we live is convinced that we are doing wrong, it won't do for us to say, "I am independent of the opinion of the community," for if it did not succeed in changing our opinion it would succeed in depressing and discouraging us, and leading to that despair of God which is the greatest sin. In that sense we may call doubt a sin, because the leaders of the Church, the representative people in

any congregation, have agreed that they will say to the young, to the sceptic: "Unless you are prepared to accept everything that I accept, everything on which the Christian Church has once laid emphasis, you cannot be a part of this Church."

Now in order that we may not get too far afield, in order that we may make this thing possibly helpful to some one, let us ask ourselves what form the doubt takes to-day. It takes the form of doubt of what is called the miraculous. It is very widespread. Boys and girls are home from school to-day; perhaps you have had a talk with some of them, and perhaps they have told you the difficulties they have begun to feel about the Christian religion. They are perplexed, they are troubled, they are sceptical of what is called the miraculous. It is still more so in college, where men have gone deeper into the study of nature with its

inevitable law. It is found in professional life where men have made a specialty of some scientific aspect of the universe. Yes, it is found even amongst the students of theology. Some of the younger clergy who have made the deepest study of the history of the New Testament will say to older men, if they feel sure of their sympathy: "We were taught that the four Gospels were the records made by contemporary eye-witnesses. We have learned that that is not true of any one of them." Those who speak thus may mean no more than that the Gospels *as we now have them* are not the work of the men whose names they bear. Of course it was only carelessness that led any one to speak of Mark and Luke as eye-witnesses. They belonged to the second generation. "We have learned," they continue, "another thing, which is that the first three Gospels are themselves drawn from a common source which has

disappeared, but which scholars say they can trace throughout Matthew, Mark, and Luke. When we look deeper into it we find that the earlier the source of the story of Jesus the less is the marvellous element contained in it, and the farther away from the time the greater is the miraculous element, and the result of this has led us to feel that we can no longer assent to the truth of many of the stories embodied in the New Testament, and transplanted into the creeds and formulas of the Church. And thus we find ourselves separated from father and mother, and from the whole long line of religious people from whom we have come. We find ourselves becoming alien to all ecclesiastical religious life."

Before considering this question of the Bible I wish to call attention to its bearing on the teaching of the Church. No one can examine the Prayer-Book without seeing that the creeds and formularies are

steeped in the miraculous. It is therefore concluded that to question the miraculous unfits us for using such a book. That this raises a deep moral problem I would be the last to deny. I cannot discuss it here. But I would not be willing to ignore it. This, however, may be said. The Prayer-Book is to be interpreted by the Bible. If one has come to the conclusion that the Bible is not a trustworthy guide in the spiritual life, of course he cannot use the formularies of the Church which are largely in the words of the Bible. But if one is sure that in the Bible there is contained a revelation of the means of salvation but that this is independent of some of the miraculous events in which the revelation is given, surely he is not guilty of untruthfulness if he uses the formularies in the sense in which he understands the Bible. For example, in the Book of Acts we have an account of the marvellous awakening of the Chris-

tian consciousness which we call the "Descent of the Spirit" at Pentecost. The simple-hearted and devout reader naturally supposes that this was followed by the power to speak foreign languages. For centuries there was no other interpretation given. It may be the right interpretation. It was incorporated at the Reformation into the Communion Service for Whitsunday, where it is said that there was given to the Apostles "the gift of diverse languages." To-day I think it is safe to say that it would be difficult to find a man learned in the Scriptures who thinks this to be the true statement of what took place. It is generally believed that there was the same phenomenon as is mentioned in Corinthians, and called "Speaking with tongues." Are we debarred from the communion on Whitsunday because, in the spirit of the collect for that day: "O God who at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful

people by sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit, grant us by the same spirit to have a *right judgment* in all things," we judge that "diverse languages" must be used as equivalent to "tongues?"

Do you suppose that I am wasting my energy and your time in telling you something that is imaginary? It is the result of what has been said to me by boys and girls, and men and women who felt sure that they would find at least a sympathetic response. How are we to deal with this state of mind, which is so widespread, from boys in the schools to professional men in our universities? Of course the most drastic way would be to pull down the school-houses and the universities in order that these young people may not learn things which, as we say, may unsettle their faith. But so far as I know in Protestantism there is no voice raised for that remedy. There is

another way, and that is to say: "This thing is the result of pride of intellect, and if these young people and old people, too, were submissive to the teaching of the Church, and would accept what the Church says, then all would be well." It may be, but as a matter of fact they do not accept it, and argument is worse than useless, because all the evidence is in and the jury cannot agree!

It seems to me that the time has come for the Church to exercise the power of remission and say to these young people: "Doubt is no sin." Say to them what the greatest teacher of Church history alive to-day, a man whose whole life has been devoted to the study of the Scripture with a thoroughness that has never been surpassed by any scientific investigation of the secrets of the universe, said to the students of the University of Berlin, who asked him to speak to them face to face not as a clergyman

but as a religious man about the deepest things of life. They flocked from all the "faculties," as they are called, of that great university—students of law, of medicine, of history, students of philosophy and theology, students of political economy—all gathered together to hear that man speak to them in words that were afterward collected and published under the title, "What is Christianity?"*

Now, Harnack, in his lectures, has considered this very question that I have brought before you this morning, and his judgment I should like to read you. In the first place, the keynote to the whole subject is given in the opening words of the first talk to these young men:

"The great English philosopher, John Stuart Mill, has somewhere observed that mankind cannot be too often re-

* "What is Christianity?" by Adolph Harnack; translated by Thomas Bailey Saunders. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1901.

minded that there was once a man of the name of Socrates. That is true, but still more important is it to remind mankind again and again that a man of the name of Jesus Christ once stood in their midst."*

And then he comes to that question which he knew perplexed and troubled the minds and hearts of that great student body, the question of miracles, and this is what he says to them:

"It is very remarkable that Jesus Himself did not assign that critical importance to His miraculous deeds which even the Evangelist Mark and the others all attributed to them. Did He not exclaim, in words of complaint and accusation, 'Unless ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe.' He who uttered these words cannot have held that belief in the wonders which He wrought was the right or the only avenue to the recognition of

* *Ibid.*, p. 1.

His person and His mission. No, in all essential points He must have thought of them quite otherwise than His evangelists did, and the remarkable fact that those very evangelists, without appreciating its range, hand down the statement that 'Jesus did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief,' shows us from another and a very different side with what caution we must receive these miraculous stories and into what category we must put them. It follows from all this that we must not try to evade the *gospel* by intrenching ourselves behind the miraculous stories related by the evangelists. In spite of these stories, no, in part even in them, we are presented with a reality which has claims upon our perception. Study it and do not let yourself be deterred because this or that miraculous story strikes you as strange or leaves you cold. If there is anything here that you find unintelli-

gible, put it quietly aside. Perhaps you will leave it there forever; perhaps the meaning will dawn upon you later and the story assume a significance of which you never dreamed. Once more let me say, do not be deterred, the question of miracles is of relative indifference in comparison with everything else which is found in the gospel. It is not miracles that matter, the question on which everything turns is whether we are helplessly yoked to an inexorable necessity, or whether a God exists who rules and governs and who has power to compel Nature, whom we can move by prayer and make a part of our experience." *

How wise is this discrimination—discrimination the first essential in any attempt to deal with these great questions. Phillips Brooks was once asked if he believed in God, and answered: "It is perfectly impossible to give a categorical

* *Ibid.*, pp. 29–30.

answer to such a question as that." What did he mean when he said that he could not answer yes or no to such a simple question as that? He meant that, first of all, he must know what the man had in mind when he spoke of "God." If he meant an exalted man sitting on a throne far up above the sky, then he did not believe in God. But if he meant that life in which we live and move and have our being, by which we are comforted and upheld, to which we believe we are on our way, then his whole life was the answer to the question. So I think it ought to be about this question of miracles. When someone says, "I do not believe in the miraculous," naturally religious people are shocked and draw back because they know, or if they do not know they feel instinctively that the denial of the miraculous may mean the assertion of the belief that this universe is a closed mechanism and that whatever

appears in it, whether it be the rocks of the mountains or the fishes of the sea or the birds of the air, life vegetable, physical, ethical, spiritual, is simply a product of the ceaseless grinding of this great machine which sometime will call back the product into the machine by which it was produced, until at last the whole mechanism shall disappear in the scattered universe. If that be the belief of any man there can be no religious appeal to him. He is lost—the very fundamental thing without which there can be no religious life he does not believe in. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*

Now I need not tell you young men who are in college, I need not tell you older men and women who are at all familiar with the drift of modern philosophy in France and in Germany and in

* Hebrews 11 : 6.

Scotland and England, that such a position, while it was taken by not an inconsiderable number of men twenty-five years ago, is to-day an anachronism, and that the whole tendency of modern philosophy is to emphasize the spirituality of all that is seen and touched. I say the whole drift is away from a mechanical conception of the universe to a spiritual interpretation of life. Life is a miracle. It was not produced by matter unless matter itself be spiritual. There is a sense in which the denial of the miraculous is a denial of any true religion. But because of that it does not by any means follow that when men or women say: "We are unable to accept the miraculous stories told in the four Gospels concerning the time and life of Jesus Christ," they are irreligious; on the contrary, most often we find that the whole religious aspiration of the soul goes forth in adoration to Jesus Christ,

but the hard facts make it impossible for the soul to draw near to Him.

It seems to me the time has come for the Church to discriminate and to say that though the acceptance of those miracles is not essential to discipleship of Jesus Christ, we are not called upon to deride the miracles, we are not called upon to admit that we ourselves have lost all confidence in that record. All we are called upon to do is to lift the sin of doubt off the hearts of these young people lest the Church lose them and they lose the Church.

Now I am aware that some one will say: "If such a position is taken the very foundation of our faith is removed, for if you once admit that there is a flaw in the evidence of the four Gospels where are you to end?" My answer to that is: That we who take such a position are in danger of putting ourselves at the standpoint of those who in the Church of

Corinth declared that their faith rested upon the personality of Peter or Apollos or Paul. To whom Paul said: "Let me ask you one question, did Peter or Apollos or Paul die for you? Were you baptized into the name of any one of them?" So I ask you in regard to this question: Is the gospel the foundation of your faith or is Jesus Christ the foundation of your faith? Paul said: "No foundation can any man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." . . . "The same yesterday, to-day, and forever." "What, then," it may be said, "is the value of the Gospels?" The value of the Gospels is this: they are, above all that has ever been written, the most perfect portrait of the Divine Man in whom we believe. But when we say they are portraits, I do not suppose anyone will assert that they are adequate portraits. Surely no one of the evangelists would for a moment declare that what he said was the final

word in the revelation of the Son of God. If Mark, who seems to have written first, had taken that position, why should Matthew have tried to add to the portrait. If Matthew had taken it why should Luke try to add to the portrait, and if Luke had taken it why should John, in his old age, have drawn another picture to hang by the side of the pictures of Mark and Matthew and Luke? No one of them is adequate.

But if no one of them be adequate, are we doing any disrespect to them if we suggest that possibly the Evangelists, in their efforts to reveal that Life which they knew they never could fully reveal, incorporated here and there a story which they thought would throw *light* upon the meaning of that life? If they found on some fragment of papyrus a wonderful story written by some man who had spent a day with Jesus, or heard from another what his mother told him when she went

with the pilgrims to one of the feasts of Jerusalem, the last thing they would have thought of doing would have been to ask if in all its details it was "true" in the modern, scientific sense of that word. All they cared to consider was: Is it congruous, does it illuminate, does it reveal the hidden life of the Son of God? If so, and there was room for it, it was painted into the picture to give either background or "atmosphere." So I understand the last words of the Gospel of John. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." *

Every one of us no doubt has seen either the original or some good copy of Paul Veronese's "Marriage at Cana of Galilee,"

* John 20 : 30, 31.

where the host is dressed in gorgeous robes and the Nubian slave hands the lordly chalice, where the dogs eye the savory dish, and the table is spread with everything that can delight the eye or taste. If we are in a critical mood we may say to ourselves: "Is that a picture of the marriage at Cana of Galilee—would the Jew have let a dog come in to the feast? Were there Nubians who were slaves? Are not these costumes Italian Renaissance? Is it not all very different from the simple marriage to which Jesus went?" But if our mood be receptive, as it ought to be when we stand before a work of art, we will say: "Yes, it is all different, but why did the man paint it? Why did he bring in everything that he thought would add to the glory and splendor of life?" Simply because he knew that nothing had any value in life unless the guest was Jesus. It is because He is there that all these details sink into their

proper place as attempts on the part of the artist to tell us what the presence of Jesus Christ meant to him—the simplest marriage feast would be transfigured into all the glory that an Italian of the Renaissance could possibly imagine, because it would seem to him the natural outward and visible expression of the change that had come because of the presence of the Divine Guest. Then when the critical and the receptive mood have given place to reflection, we say: "This is a picture of Christ in the atmosphere of the sixteenth century." Now turn again to the gospels and gaze at the picture of Christ in the *first* century. The background is homely, the "atmosphere" is not scientific but childlike, but Jesus is the Son of God.

That is the way, it seems to me, we should approach these wonderful stories of our Master's life. We need not condemn them and say they are not true,

but if anyone says to me, "I cannot feel that I am reading now actual facts that took place," then I should ask that man to consider this question which is the root of the whole matter. What is the object of the gospel? It is to show us Jesus Christ. It was inevitable that the man who attempted this great task should represent Jesus in life, and in a world very different from the world we know. Therefore, let us ask ourselves not whether they were right in their view of the world, but whether they were right in their belief in Jesus Christ. For if we can get that, if any one of these young people can be drawn to that Life all the rest will fall into its proper place.

What is that Life? It is the life of the Son of God, the free man in this universe unappalled by any storm that arises on the sea, unshaken by any sickness, accident or death that comes to man. Is it strange that in the attempt to tell the

story of such a Life as that, so different from anything they had ever seen, it should have seemed to these men, living in the first century, that what we call "miracles" would be the natural expression of such a life? It was a life at home with God. If you and I were at home with God as Jesus was, would there be worked in your life and mine the miracle of transfiguration? I do not know what would happen. I know that Mark tried to tell and failed to tell what happened on the Mount, but he said: "He seemed to talk with the great prophet and with the greatest lawgiver. It seemed as if he was talking about his death at Jerusalem and instead of being sad and broken his very face shone and his garments were all turned white, and a voice said: 'It is my Son.'" What do I care what the color of the garment was? What do I care if it was the silver mist on the mountain top touched by the early morn-

ing light that made the garment seem "whiter than any fuller on earth could white it"—while indeed the seamless robe retained the same sombre hue which it had when Mary or the other loving women wove it for Jesus' use. I know that that is the Life in which God is well pleased. I know that if I could only get a little nearer to my God some sort of transfiguration would take place even in me! I know it was a Life that walked from the very first conscious moment, gradually understanding His mission to the end, joyful in His faith in the Cross. You and I talk about the necessity of faith in the Cross for ourselves. Think of Jesus' faith in the Cross! He was convinced that the remedy for all the ills of the world was in self-sacrifice, that if He once was lifted up on the Cross He would draw all men to Him, that no one could resist the appeal of dying love. Ah, if I could have that faith in the Cross, if I could feel that

the object of life is not to have more money, not to have fame, is not to be comfortable, but is to draw my brothers and my sisters to me that I may draw them to God, would not that be the essential thing, would not that be the beginning of a new social order, where rich and poor, wise and foolish might live together in peace, and the will of God be done?

It is the story of a Life that walked every day in the assurance of eternal life. If now I cannot find the thread that leads me through the labyrinth that is described by Mark and Matthew and Luke and John in the resurrection morning, if I cannot follow it all out, what difference does it make if the assurance of eternal life through Him has come to me? I know that my Redeemer is alive and that I shall see God.

These are the things we ought to tell, these are the things we ought to ask the young to feel and try to incorporate in

life. I believe there would be a great response if the Church were wise enough and strong enough and holy enough to remit the sin of doubt, that we might have faith in Jesus Christ. If Paul were living to-day I believe he would write, in the spirit in which he wrote Romans: "Let not him that believeth not in miracles despise him that believeth in them: and let not him that believeth in miracles judge him that believeth not in them for God hath received him." *

* See Romans 14 : 3.

V

GOD'S CHRISTMAS GIFT

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."
—II Cor. 9 : 15.

It is of God's Christmas gift that we would think this Christmas morning. "Unspeakable" means that which we cannot fully explain. I think that all the Christmas gifts that are flooding the world to-day are the manifestation of the greatest law of life, which is that the spiritual must be manifested in the material; that the inward and spiritual grace must show itself in an outward and visible sign; that God must be seen in human flesh. For that is what it all means. Many do not understand the unspeakable gift, but we are not content to love our friends, we want to give some

outward and visible sign of that love —we want to send our love in something that can be seen and touched. So God wanted to send His love to you and me to see and touch and hear. So I interpret all this Christmas season as the unconscious manifestation of the great spiritual law of life.

It was seen in the joy of the children last Sunday afternoon who gathered about the Christmas tree and sang their hymns of praise to the Babe that was born of Mary. It was seen on Tuesday in the little children in the Kindergarten in the Parish House, many of them of Jewish faith, singing with joy because of the glory of Christmas. It is seen down on Ellis Island among the little children of the immigrants, to whom our children sent their gifts to be placed on the Christmas tree, that these little ones might have as their first taste of the Promised Land the joy of the Christmas season. Yes, it was

in the heart of that kind Jewish friend of ours who gave a dinner at the Parish House that others might feel with him the joy that he could not understand of the Christmas season. You see it in the steps and faces of the people you pass on the streets, like that man whom I saw on Broadway who suddenly broke into a dancing step, and, catching my eye, turned very red and said: "I can't help it. When I see the holly I've got to skip!" That is the feeling all over the world to-day, because we are subject to the great spiritual law that the love unseen must be manifested in some gift.

But you and I have come together as Christian people, presently, I hope, all of us, to partake of the Lord's Supper—God's great Christmas feast, and so we want to take one moment of our service and try to make plain to ourselves something of what the unspeakable gift means. We cannot tell all of it, but I think we

can tell to one another more than the children know, and more than those who do not know Jesus can know.

First of all, then, it is the gift of peace on earth. God sends the Prince of Peace to be the leader of humanity, in order that war may cease and peace may reign, in order that hatred may be killed and love may flourish, in order that men may seek no longer to conquer but to save one another. Now I know what some of you will say: "How can we talk of God's gift of peace to the world when after two thousand years of the reign of Christ the world is what it is to-day—southeastern Europe lying in a deathlike swoon because its very blood has been drained by war. All Europe an armed camp, the newspapers of France and Germany and Italy and England calling on this country to invade Mexico, to put down the bandit war. How can you say that God has given peace to the world when things

are as they are?" Well, my friends, I do not say that we have accepted God's gift, I only say He has offered it, and this I say, that the horror that we have to-day of war is the proof that we feel how unnatural it is, how inhuman it is, how far from the will of God. That is something to have gained. If peace does not at the moment reign, shall we lose heart? Not at all, we are like men and women sailing across the sea; they have been in the midst of a great storm and the winds have howled and their hearts have failed them for fear, and one who knows the signs of the times says: "The storm has passed." And yet there are the great billows still rising up, yes, but there has been to him who can read the signs of the times the vision of the day that is on its way. The storm has really passed, the day of peace is coming. So the pious heart echoes the saying of the Psalmist, for: "Though the stormy wind ariseth which lifteth up

the waves thereof, yet he maketh the storm to cease so that the waves thereof are still." Yes, the vision is the thing. For what is a vision but seeing afar off the will of God—the will of God which He fulfilleth as surely as the sinking sun must rise? How long ago all that was seen by the great seer whose words I will read you! "Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night . . . and I beheld even till the beast was slain. . . . As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet *their lives were prolonged for a season and time* . . . and, behold one like the Son of man. . . . And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom . . . his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."* The life of this fierce beast has been prolonged, but the Human Spirit shall at last prevail.

* Daniel 7.

God's great Christmas gift is peace to the earth, and when the world will receive it then peace shall abide. Here may I turn aside for a moment and say a word concerning peace in this land of ours? If we could put aside our party prejudices, and like those statesmen, Mr. Taft and Mr. Choate, rise from party platform into an atmosphere of patriotism, we should give thanks to God to-day that the President of the United States has not invaded Mexico. Had there been in the White House a weak man, long before this he would have been pushed across the Rio Grande, and had there been in the White House an impulsive man, long ago he would have let loose the dogs of war. Whether the policy of the President, so different from that to which the world is accustomed, can succeed, I do not know; but even if it should fail in the end, it is something that we have a Christmas undisturbed

by the shouts of war; for had it not been that that man loved peace some of you would see the Christmas that you saw in the early '60's, when every gift was dyed in blood.

And now, for we may not take long in our Christmas meditation, turn from the country to ourselves. What is God's Christmas gift to you and me? How can it be better described than in the words of Mary's hymn, the *Magnificat:* "He that is mighty hath magnified me." The mighty God has given you and me something of His dignity, something of His power, something of His glory. God has come into human life and every one, as Paul says, in whose heart Christ has been born, may sing with Mary: "He that is mighty hath magnified me." My poor, insignificant life has something of the glory of God. That is God's gift to you. That is what He is telling you through all this Christmas story—that He is dwelling

in you, that you are the sons and daughters of the living God.

Holy is His name. The best gift is not the power of God, it is not the glory of God, it is something of the goodness of God. If you have been in this past year, my poor brother, intemperate, now He will magnify you into self-control. If you have been mean, He will magnify you into generosity. If you have been untruthful, He will magnify you into great courage. If you have been forgetful, dull and stupid in the midst of the glory of life, He will magnify you so that you will be strong and helpful and wise and good. There is nothing you can want that God does not want to give you.

Holy is His name. He may not give you health, He may not give you long life, He may not give you fame, but He will give you goodness. He will give you goodness and all the rest is as nothing. He that does the will of God abides for-

ever. God's Christmas gift is the dignifying of human life, and the opening through the humble pathway of duty a glory that it is beyond our power to conceive.

Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.

VI

EXPECTATION

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

—St. Matthew 25 : 13.

"When the Son of man cometh,"—that was an expression familiar to the Jews, and it meant the end of an era, when all the familiar things should pass away; when the sun and the moon and the stars and the earth should be gone,—then the Son of man would come. They interpreted it as the last great event in the history of God's dealing with the world. But you and I find it a little difficult to sympathize with their point of view, for living in the twentieth century we are convinced that the sun and the moon and the stars and the earth are

destined to remain for unimaginable ages, therefore we do not quite understand the force of the expression, "the Son of man will come."

I think that something has taken place in our religious life analogous to that which has taken place in our study of the earth itself. There was a time when in the teaching of geology emphasis was laid upon the cataclysms that had shaken the solid earth, but to-day that has given place to the thought of the slow evolution of the different strata of which the earth is composed. Something of the same sort has come in our religious thought. We have come to think of the coming of the Son of man not as a sudden cataclysm but as a slow process—the diffusion of that spirit of Divine Humanity which was revealed in Jesus Christ. And we think that we have a justification for that thought in the Gospels themselves, for while undoubtedly Matthew and Mark

and Luke, what we call the Synoptic Gospels, are filled with the thought of the final cataclysm, all that has disappeared in the Gospel of John, and there we have the thought of the coming of the Spirit of God instead of the sudden descent of the Son of man through the clouds of heaven. And yet, in our thought of nature we cannot altogether banish the thought of cataclysms. They are continually recurring, hurricanes and tidal-waves and earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, these things occur again and again. In the same way individual life is full of accident and it is when we think of these great catastrophes of nature, and when we think of the accidents that are continually befalling individual men and women, that we are able to put ourselves back as it were into the first century and understand something of the thought in the hearts of the men and women who heard Jesus Christ say:

"Watch, for ye know not when the Son of man cometh."

These words are at once a warning and an inspiration. I do not think the preacher need dwell much upon the warning. I think that work is being done by the daily newspapers. Every day we can read of these accidents which for the individual mean the passing away of the sun and the moon and the stars and the solid earth. For him they may be blotted out in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. The poor strikers at Calumet,—whatever you may think of their agitation, whether you think it was right or wrong has nothing to do with it—they gathered together to forget their grief and poverty and their rage! to enjoy with their children a Christmas tree, and in a moment hundreds of them were trampled to death in a wild and senseless panic. A man and his wife cross this great avenue to dine with friends. When they stood

on the eastern side of it they had no more doubt than you and I, who are sitting here, that years of happiness were before them, yet before they reached the western side they had been cut down by an automobile, and in a moment both were dead. The sun and the moon and the stars and the earth for them were no more. The boy came home from school a week ago full of health and strength and joy, and to-day he is dead. The young fireman goes home to sleep after hours of fearful toil and in the night the house is burned and he with it. The girl goes to her first ball, and in the joy and excitement of that great experience falls dead among the dancers. "Watch, for ye know neither the *day* nor the *hour* wherein the Son of man cometh."

I think it is well for us from time to time to think of these things, though I do not think it is well for us to dwell unduly upon them. I think it is well,

from time to time, and especially at such a time as this, when we come to one of the milestones on the journey of life, passing from one year to another,—though it be an imaginary line in time, it is a real spiritual experience,—it is well for us to remember the shortness and uncertainty of human life, that we may watch, that we may be alert to a sense of duty, that we may ask ourselves whether to-day we ought not to take that talent out of the napkin in which it has been so long hid and which from time to time it may be we have thought we would take out and invest for God. We ought to ask ourselves when we are going to forgive our enemy. We ought to ask ourselves when we are going to begin that generous life which sometimes in a great emotion we have desired and then have hardened our hearts against. We ought to ask ourselves when we are going to leave the sin that doth so easily

beset us and begin the life of temperance and purity and truth. We know not when the Son of man comes, and when He comes you and I are to give an account.

Now, I say, it is well from time to time to pause and think of these certain facts of life, lest we grow foolish and lose all sense of the seriousness and dignity of life. But the familiar adage, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," has its significance in the religious life. If we think of nothing but duty, then our life will tend to grow like that of the Pharisee, until at last we come to the point where we congratulate God that He has got some one who will do His work as well as we do! Until we come to think that God owes us something for what we have done for Him! Or like the boy in the hot schoolroom, who hears the quail whistle in the stubble and longs to be out in the freedom of the world, we

grow weary of well-doing. Duty is the foundation and the background of life, but we must rise above the foundation and we must come out of the background into the foreground and that is why I say these words of our Master are not simply a warning—they are also an inspiration to a life of joy and power.

Now, the joy of life lies largely in expectation, that is, in the confidence that things will happen that will be delightful. The boy or girl gets out of bed on the morning of a holiday filled with a great expectation and that expectation colors all the day and changes the very events as they come to pass. No doubt some one will say that is incident to youth and it is not to be expected that men and women, who have had some experience of the hardness of life, shall be able to look forward with a joyful anticipation to the future. I have no doubt, I know, in some cases that is true.

There are men and women whose lives have been very hard. But has it been so with most of us here this morning—with you and me? We have had our sorrows and our failures and our disappointments and our trials, but has life, on the whole, been such a dreary and unprofitable thing that we do not care to prolong it? Not at all, yet we are all in danger of falling into the habit of thinking of the hardships and the failures that are behind us instead of being alert to the joys and the beauties that are before us.

Let me illustrate this by a simple story. A man was walking not long ago through the pine woods and his mind was dull and his thoughts were sombre. He was going over the past—how much he had lost, how little he had gained, until he was in danger, at the next step, of slipping into the slimy bog of self-pity, when suddenly a turn in the path through the woods brought him face to face with

a vision of beauty. On an old pine-tree was hung a garland—a perfect circle of gold and brown and crimson. If this man had been a Greek peasant living two thousand years ago he would have returned and said that he had seen the coronet of a dryad in the wood. If he had been a Hebrew prophet he would have said that in his hour of despondency God sent His angel and hung the crown of glory right in his path. But, being a man in the twentieth century, after the first feeling of awe and joy had passed, curiosity arose and he went to see what this thing was; and it was simple enough. A little vine not larger than my thumb, had grown up the bole of the tree and caught by some inequality in the bark had been turned and then caught again so that it made a perfect circle and the glory of the leaves in the autumn frost had made it a thing of beauty, and its memory a joy forever. It was not a

dryad, it was not an angel, it was the spirit of Universal Life, in one moment become visible. If you and I would walk through the woods that are before us expecting God's revelation of goodness and strength, this would be a different year for every one of us.

"Watch—be on the lookout—for ye know not when the Son of man will come," not to destroy but to bless. Why should it not be so? To some of you in this coming year will come a new and beautiful life. Some woman will press a babe to her breast, some man will have opened before him larger opportunities for showing what sort of man he is. Some of us, I hope, will come to change our sense of value and think that goodness is the best thing in the world. Some of you will know something of what it means to be near to God. The Son of man, the Divine Spirit in human life, will come to you.

And now we come back to the way in which we began. Some one will say: "Yes, but when all this has been said you are balancing untoward against joyful events and at the end there is to be one event to us all, every one of us is going to die!" Yes, but we are not talking about events; the thing that gives life value is not an event, it is personality. The coming of the Son of man is the coming of God to your life and mine, in a way that we can see and touch and in some measure understand. That is the final meaning of life. Of course to every one of us the final event should be the supreme experience in which the Son of man draws near to the individual soul. We have forgotten the word of the sombre but wise preacher: "There is a time to be born, and there is a time to die." Untimely birth, whether it be too soon or too late, is a tragedy the effects of which are often seen all

through life; and untimely death we speak of when it comes to the young; but how seldom do we think of the death unduly delayed as untimely! Suppose this year is the time for you or me to die, would it be a calamity? Our times are in God's hands and while we all have asked again and again that we might not die, while again and again we have escaped on the sick-bed, on the field of sport, in perils on the sea and in perils of the land, now perhaps this year it is best that we should escape no more. Suppose your work is done and to put the brush once more on the picture is to ruin it, or to drive the chisel once more into the statue is to crack it, would it not be well that a wise and loving hand should draw you away when your work is done? Suppose your long continuance means a burden upon those you love, would it be a calamity if this year that burden were lifted from them? Suppose your soul

has reached the receptive stage when the revelation of the new life can best come to you, will you then ask that it may not come, that the Son of man, the Friend that from time to time you have seen, the Master who falteringly you have served, will not give you the great gift? If it should be to you such an experience as came to those men on the Resurrection Day, when walking to Emmaus they communed with their Friend and He revealed to them the mystery of the past life—would it be a calamity if the great mystery should be made known? If it should come to you and me this year that like Peter we saw the Divine Life on the shore and cried, "It is the Lord," and cast ourselves into the sea, if there He met us with forgiveness and the revelation of new usefulness in the eternal life, would it be a calamity? "There is a time to be born and there is a time to die."

What shall be our conclusion of the whole matter? I do not know how better to express the serious yet hopeful spirit with which we ought to enter again into a new year than in the sublime prayer of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, put into the Visitation of the Sick in our Book of Common Prayer, though it had no place in the English Book. "O God, whose days are without end, and whose mercies cannot be numbered; make us, we beseech thee, deeply sensible of the shortness and uncertainty of human life, and let thy Holy Spirit lead us in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our lives; that, when we shall have served thee in our generation, we may be gathered unto our fathers, having the testimony of a good conscience; in the communion of the Catholic Church; in the confidence of a certain faith; in the comfort of a reasonable, religious and holy hope; in favor with thee, our God, and

in perfect charity with the world. All this we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

VII

THE INN

"He brought him to an inn."—St. Luke 10 : 34.

This is a line in a story which every Christian and many who do not call themselves Christians know by heart—the story of the Good Samaritan. In it Jesus answers the question of the lawyer: "Who is my neighbor?" The lawyer had a long history back of him. He knew there was an obligation inherent in human nature to help your neighbor. The man who falls by your side you must lift up. The brother that is wounded you must tend or revenge. The member of the tribe or the clan, all who belong to the same nation, all who worship God in a certain way have a claim upon you. The human claim because they are nigh and there-

fore they must be helped. But it was evident that Jesus had something different in mind when he quoted: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and the lawyer said, not for one moment denying the principle but seeking for the application: "Yes, but who is my neighbor?" Jesus' answer, in the fewest words, is this: "The man who needs you is your neighbor." And we might say that the progress of the social life of mankind can be measured by the radius that extends from the heart of a man to the circumference of his beneficence. How large is your life? That radius will give you your stature. How large is the Church or the State or the Christian world? Measure it by that line. Year by year the line lengthens and the great circle of Christian beneficence is enlarged.

This was the characteristic of the Christian Church at the beginning. They went forth repeating the old words of

Proverbs with a new meaning: "He that giveth unto the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and look what he layeth out it shall be paid him again." Yes, and those other words of which we have no record in the Gospel, which have been saved to us, as it were by chance, the words of the Lord Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." That was the spirit and the test of true membership in the Christian Church—the helping of every life that needed help, claiming it, whether it were Jew or Gentile, barbarian or Scythian, bond or free, as neighbor to the man who was the brother of Jesus Christ.

That also was the predominating thought all through the Middle Ages. I suppose it would be no exaggeration to say that no story that was ever told had such an influence on the practical life of Western Europe as this story of the Good Samaritan, for all over Europe the weary traveller found some door that opened to

him when the evening fell,—the door of the monastery; whether he walked across the deserts of Egypt or was lost in the snows of the high Alps—wherever man was in need the door was open and he was taken in because he was neighbor to Jesus Christ.

Then when the Reformation came men began to ask themselves a great many questions, and among others whether this whole system of beneficence on the part of the Christian Church had not produced the disease that it undertook to cure. Certainly it had come to pass that in England, Germany, France, and Italy the highways were filled with sturdy beggars, and the monasteries were filled with lazy, inefficient men, and that was one of the things that the Reformation immediately started to clean up. As a result of it those of you who travel from one country to another in Europe know that the highways to-day are filled with beggars who

are the children of the recipients of the charity of the monastery and that in the Protestant countries those beggars have largely been driven from the road.

Yes, but a thing that was forgotten in all this discussion was this: that the Catholic Church never undertook to cure poverty. It accepted the words of our Saviour as if they were the expression of God's eternal will: "The poor ye have always with you, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good." They accepted that as the normal condition of human society, and did what they could to relieve the present poverty that was at their door.

Now there has come an entirely new conception of the meaning of human life, and the State has taken over this problem of poverty and is attempting to deal with it in a scientific, that is, in an intelligent way. For there has arisen of late, very late, a new vision of human society in

which degrading poverty shall be abolished. I do not see how any man or woman who calls himself a Christian can fail to thrill at the thought of such a society as that—degrading poverty banished—no little child's flesh and bones ground up in the machinery of a mill! No young girl just blossoming into womanhood sweated until the blood comes out of her pores! No young man crushed and beaten down by a greater power when he is trying to lift himself a little in the world. All the foul tenements done away with, and something approaching economic equality reigning in democracy! For it is felt now, as never before, that a democracy that has accomplished something of legal and political equality must take another step toward the approximation to economic equality.

This great vision and the hope that has come with it is attracting the noble-hearted youth in every country of West-

ern Europe and in these United States under the general head of Socialism.

Now if by Socialism is meant what the word literally means, brotherhood, then every Christian man and woman must be a Socialist; he cannot be indifferent to this hope for the abolition of degrading poverty. But it does not rest in a great hope, it is organizing itself into different companies to accomplish the desired end by certain specific means. For instance, the Single Tax that will divert the unearned increment into the treasury of the state, a system of taxation that will bear heavily upon the very rich and allow those of moderate means almost entirely to escape! Or the taking over of all industries by the central government and distributing the product amongst the people *pro rata*. Do you not see, then, the difficulty in which the minister finds himself when he is asked to turn from a great and noble vision to

express an opinion upon political plans for the accomplishment of that vision? If he does not express his approval and call himself a Socialist in the narrow sense in which the word is being used now, then he may expect to be denounced by certain bishops, by not a few of his brethren, and above all by the newspapers, who will accuse him of flattering the rich, because he cannot give his unqualified approval to these schemes, believing that any one of them would make the disease ultimately infinitely greater than it is to-day. But I am not to be deflected from my purpose by any such fear as that when I say that the Christian Church has a definite work to do in this matter which is quite independent of the political schemes that are on foot for its accomplishment. And here let me say, before I leave it, that we might well learn a lesson from the history of our country.

There was a great vision fifty years ago of the abolition of human slavery, and there were good and wise men—they were better than they were wise—men with burning hearts, such, for instance, as Wendell Phillips and Charles Sumner and Thaddeus Stevens and Horace Greeley—every one of those men felt that immediate emancipation was the only solution of the problem that beset us. But the wisest man in the nineteenth century was Abraham Lincoln, and he knew that the most important thing for slave as well as owner was that the Union should be preserved: "Preserve the Union, the nation and its great ideal, and slavery is bound to wither away." So I say about this movement for the abolition of degrading poverty. I love it, I would do the little I can to bring it to pass, but I know that if we do not guard the national prosperity degrading poverty will not merely continue, but it will spread.

There has been built up in this land since the close of the Civil War such prosperity as the world had never seen. How has it been done? Some man tells me it has been done by fraud, and I do not doubt that there have been great fortunes the foundations of which were laid in fraud. Another says that it has been done by the crushing of the weak competitor. I know of individual cases where that has been done, resulting in great prosperity for the oppressor. Yes, but when we drop our voices and quiet down a little, is there any sane man or woman who believes that this is a full explanation of the prosperity with which this land has been blessed for the last fifty years? We know that these things are the exceptions and that while they are very dreadful and ought to be dealt with by the firm hand of government, nevertheless we know that we are not a nation of thieves or thugs or frauds.

It has been the energy, the intelligence, the solemn consecration day after day to duty, co-operating with the unexampled gifts of God's bounty, that have built up the great prosperity of these United States.

Now, prosperity is a palace of crystal, and it can easily be destroyed. But when it is once destroyed it cannot easily be built up again, and that, it seems to me, is what is forgotten by many warm-hearted men and women, by many politicians and statesmen—that it is our duty to conserve the prosperity of this nation, while keeping in mind the splendid vision of the gradual and ultimate abolition of degrading poverty.*

Now let us get a little nearer to our text: What is the opportunity for you and me to do what no state has ever

*No one, I hope, will so misunderstand this as to suppose I mean to identify "prosperity" with its antithesis "Corporate privilege. Prosperity means Commonwealth—that in which all share.

done, or ever can do, for the state can only deal with man in the mass, it can only make the conditions somewhat different. It is just as if Pontius Pilate had built a new macadam road from Jerusalem to Jericho, and never taken one look at the individual man who was lying wounded by the wayside. What would the new macadam road do for him? Now that is what it seems to me the Church ought, first of all, to be considering—not how all the conditions of life are to be changed, not how mankind is to be benefited in the mass, but what is to be done about the individual man who lies at the roadside which we are travelling.

Well, there is the first difficulty. We are not travelling the road where the needy man lies. This Good Samaritan in the story was journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho; why I do not know. Perhaps he was going to collect rents, per-

haps he was going to buy oil, I do not know what his business was. He probably was engaged in some business that carried him along the road from Jerusalem to Jericho.

Now one word about that. This had once been one of the most fashionable roads in the world. Jericho was the resort of rich people who built their villas there, as you do at Bar Harbor or Newport or Tuxedo,—or whatever place you please in our modern life. Cleopatra had a villa at Jericho. You may imagine the social thrill of people in society when they heard that Cleopatra was in residence! It was once a great fashionable resort, and as a result the litters and companies of fashionable people went up and down this road just as modern vehicles go up and down Fifth Avenue to-day. Then the trade routes changed, and instead of the great highway from Arabia being the important thing it was the road that led

southwest to Egypt, or northwest to Cæsarea, or northeast to the Lake of Galilee, to get into communication with the great Eastern world. Well, the route of trade had changed, and fashion had changed with it, and therefore this was a deserted road filled with bandits.

Now something of the same sort has happened on this island on which we live. In the early days there were gardens running down to the Battery and to the East River and North River, and arbors in which people were sitting and conversing with their friends. It was the fashionable resort of the early Dutch society, but it is so no longer. The roads are now running north and south along this island, and the consequence is that from east to west the roads are largely deserted by those people to whom I am speaking this morning. You don't journey that way, you journey north and south, therefore if this story of the Good

Samaritan interests you, you must make it your business to journey along the unfashionable road, and then you will see what that man saw, the human life wounded.

To lay aside all figures of speech, you would see, first of all, a little child, a little boy or girl, just old enough to be out on the street, probably filthily dirty, passionate, untrained, undisciplined, yes and sometimes with the marks of brutal scars upon its face or little arms. That is what you would see. Or you would see a boy or girl at the critical age of twelve or thirteen, and there is nothing for them to do but to run in the streets with all the dangers to soul and body. And you would see girls of sixteen or seventeen, just ready to blossom into womanhood, but ignorant, destined to remain in the lower places in the great economic life of the city; no real education, no training, no great hope, lacking in refinement, imi-

tating the worst of all fashions in dress and gesture, a life that is wounded far more deeply than it knows. And you would see a man, a young man, tired at the end of the day's work. He has been lifting one of those great steel beams that it will make your back ache to see, if you stop for a moment when they are lifting them. He has been driving a team of horses for eight hours over these slippery streets—can you think of what that means, eight hours driving a team over these streets? He has been in the police force, or is a fireman, an engineer on one of the great locomotives. He has nowhere to go except the saloon, and that is always open. These are some of the things that if you journeyed you would see, and which I am trying, without your journeying, to enable you with the eye of the imagination to see.

What are you going to do about it? Well, I must tell you and bring it all to

an end, though I have not properly begun. What can you do? Well, naturally what this man did. He was a busy man, he could not stop indefinitely, he rendered first aid to the injured, and then took the man to the inn and paid his way, and (having had some experience, I suppose, in charitable work) he anticipated a deficit, and said: "If there is anything lacking, I will pay it when I come again." Large-hearted, sensible man, he picks up the wounded man and carries him to the inn.

Well, we have an Inn—it is not so large as the Biltmore, but I venture to say that it takes more people through its doors in the course of a week than the Biltmore does. It gives those poor little children of whom I spoke a taste of the joy that is the birthright of every child. We give to them, the joy that comes from unaccustomed cleanliness; joy that comes from learning self-control; that

joy which comes from finding that all life, as in the Kindergarten, if we had ears to hear, is moving to harmony. We take those boys and those girls and give them what they have a right to—play—which the streets of this city cannot allow them to have. We provide for them to play, we teach them how to play. We tell the girls how to use their hands and be happy. We tell the boys how to use their bodies and be sweet and clean and pure. We teach them to play. Men and women play with them—they are happy as they ought to be. We teach those girls something, teach them to use the needle, we lift them from the lowest ranks in the economic scale, and they become expert stenographers and secretaries, and are given places of trust—all because some one took them to that Inn. And we provide for those men, tired and weary at the end of the day's work, some place where the respectable man can meet

his friends, talk and smoke, read the magazines, play cards and billiards, and go home strengthened and refreshed.

I know that some one will say: "Why aren't you doing a greater religious work?" We are! It is the last thing we can talk about, but it is being done. Many of these people are not susceptible to direct, dogmatic religious education, but there is not one of them that is not susceptible to the influence of Jesus Christ the Divine Man. Think of the hundreds that we gather into the Sunday-schools (there were two hundred boys and girls who got up and went to the early Communion on Christmas Day). We have got those boys and girls welded into societies, in order that they may be kept in touch with the Church during those critical years that pass after Confirmation, and before they themselves are mothers and fathers, with the responsibility of the children lying heavy upon their souls.

Well, that is being done in your great Inn.

Some people seem to think that they have imitated the good Samaritan when they have taken some one to the inn. They have imitated the beast on whom the poor wounded traveller was placed! You have not only to take the man to the Inn, but you must provide for his being taken care of, and for a possible deficit. Two pence does not seem much. It represented the cost of a man's living for two days, and the promise to pay more if he had to stay longer than two days. If I were asked what represents one penny in the Parish House, I should say, speaking generally, that from this congregation we must have seventy-five dollars for every day that we keep the Inn open. So any one who wants to imitate the good Samaritan can give one hundred and fifty dollars, the equivalent of twopence. There are people here who can no more

give one penny, that is, seventy-five dollars, than they can give seven hundred and fifty dollars. There are people who could give seven hundred and fifty dollars, who could give fifteen hundred dollars and more, and at the end of the year not have had to deny themselves a single thing.

That is our Inn. But I have not told you a tithe of what it is doing. In countless ways it is helping the individual children,—boys and girls, and men and women to help themselves, while the state is discussing how best to elevate the mass. They are Jews, and Catholics, Protestants and Agnostics—our neighbors.*

* Since this sermon was preached, I have heard of a girl—not depraved, but wayward and foolish—who was taken to the Children's Court. The Judge lamented that there was no place in this city where such a girl could go to be out of temptation and be given a healthy interest in life. "The Churches," he is reported to have said, "have houses for their own people, but there is no Church that seems to care for a girl like this," and somebody in the court-room said: "Your Honor, St. Bartholomew's Parish House never asks of any child whether it be Jew or Gentile, Catholic or Protestant."

Who is the Good Samaritan? It was Jesus' portrait of Himself. He let no race prejudice, he let no ecclesiastical orthodoxy, he let nothing stand in the way of helping the man who needed him because that man was nigh to him, being his own brother, being the child of his own Father. In the Good Samaritan is summed up the eternal truth of the life of Jesus Christ in regard to the poverty of the world: "Who though he was rich yet for our sakes became poor."

VIII

THE ABANDONED FARM

"The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.

"And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

"And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

"And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

"Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

"And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root they withered away.

"And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

"But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

"Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

—St. Matthew 13 : 1.

THIS was the subject of our study in the Sunday-school last Sunday, and I have already said to the teachers somewhat

of what I shall say to you. It seems to me an appropriate subject for our consideration as we draw near once more to the time of Confirmation.

First of all, I will ask you to note this fact: The parable marks a distinct change in our Saviour's method of teaching. Up to this time He had spoken plainly, as in the Sermon on the Mount, but now for some reason He abandons that method of teaching and undertakes to preach by telling stories, by parables, by romances that have enchanted the world. How are we to explain this?

Perhaps some one who has not really entered into the spirit of the Master will say: "This is an example of a genius finding himself, finding the true vehicle for the expression of the artistic temperament; as Giotto found it in architecture, as Shakespeare found it in the drama, Jesus finds it in the parable." No doubt there is truth in this. He was indeed a

genius of whom we are thinking. He was indeed a great artist. He created the Good Samaritan, the Lost Sheep, the Prodigal Son, the Rich Fool—creations that can never die. But we misunderstand the Master altogether if we dwell unduly upon the artistic aspect of His nature. He was a plain, simple, moral teacher and spiritual inspirer above all else, and the purpose of His life was not to entertain, not to call forth æsthetic joy, but to bring people to God. The object of the change in His method must be found in the purpose of His life and in the conditions under which He was doing the work at the time of which we speak.

In the first place, He was surrounded by enemies who were catching up every word that they could to report it to the authorities in order that He might be crushed by ecclesiastical censure, or, as it came to pass, put to death by the arm of the civil authorities. Therefore Jesus,

we are told here in the verses which follow and which I have not read to you, deliberately chose a vehicle of expression which would be unintelligible to many of the people that heard Him. The letter of it was plain enough, but the spiritual meaning could only be spiritually apprehended. Therefore it was, in the first place, a safeguard for Himself, and in the second place it was a means of higher education for the disciples or scholars.

And, after all, boys and girls, is not one of the most important elements in education the puzzle that is given us? It is the puzzle of the problem, not the answer, that is the important thing in your education and mine. Now every one of these parables was a spiritual and moral puzzle. Two of them, to carry out the figure of the teacher, Jesus Himself solved, like the examples that the teacher will do on the board before the whole

class when you enter upon a new department of study; so Jesus took the first two parables and explained them, but the rest of them have been left to the disciples ever since to puzzle over and see if they could find the moral.

So I ask you this morning to think with me a little while of this parable of the soul. The letter of it, that which appears on the surface, is plain enough and certain inevitable conclusions are plain enough. Two things are evident. One is this: that the field had great diversity of soil, and the second that almost all the seeds that the harvestman sowed were lost. The first makes life interesting, the second is the tragedy of life. The awful waste of God's goodness is the tragedy of human life.

But you and I are asking questions that I do not think the first disciples would ever have thought of asking, and one of them is this: "Why are these inequal-

ities in the field? Why is it that a part of the field, which represents a certain sort of character, is so hard that, like the path across a field, when the seed falls on it it cannot penetrate the soil and so the birds of the air pick it up at once? Why is it that there are to-day lives so hard that no spiritual impression can be made upon them? Why is it that in part of the field the ground is so shallow, the ledge crops up so near the surface of the field, that only a little soil lies over it, therefore when the root strikes down it can only penetrate a little distance, not far enough to get moisture, not far enough to take real hold, and is doomed, because the instant it comes up it is withered away by the rising sun? Why should it be that a good part of the field is already pre-empted before the seed is sown so that it has no chance, so thick are the thorns growing, with the roots running everywhere under ground and

the interlacing branches keeping out light and air?" It was doomed, that seed, even before it fell. And even when we come to the fruitful part of the field, how greatly it differs! One-third of it only brings forth the fruit that the sower had desired. Why are you and I such as we are? It seems to me the first thing we need to do is to ask ourselves what we are.

Certainly every minister knows that there are men and women upon whom no spiritual impression has been made for years and years. We know that there are boys and girls upon whom apparently no spiritual impression can be made now. What is the reason? The reason is that their souls, the field of their life, has become like the path that Jesus spoke of, the path that is formed by the countless feet that have passed over it day after day and year after year, until it has changed from a field to a common high-

way where no crop can be looked for. How awful it is to think of lives that were once good soil, lives that once might have been a blessing to some other life and might have been lived to the glory of God, beaten down hard by careless habits of selfishness, of untruthfulness, habits of intemperance, until we can do no more with them! Yes, and their lives have been beaten hard by the wheels of business routine, going over them day after day, day after day, until at last that field that ought to have brought forth a harvest to the delight of man and the glory of God is dry, hard, and fruitless. It is the crushing wheel of routine, it is the careless daily habits of life, that have made our hearts so hard that even the living God cannot touch us.

Or, take another case. Here is soil that is shallow—shallow men and women. Was there ever a more perfect description of the shallow life than we get in

the few words that Jesus speaks in this parable? Don't you and I know them—don't you and I know men and women, women especially in this respect, the whole energy of whose life seems to be given up to the expectation of some new fashion, and when it comes they receive it with joy? Yes, do we not know men who are ready to leave everything and take up with enthusiasm some new reform that is going to change the world, receiving the news with joy? Yes, do we not know men and women who are taking up with new religions with great joy? Have we not seen boys and girls and men and women receive the word of God with great enthusiasm, and then, when the test comes, when the fashion is laughed at, when the reform becomes hard, when the new religion calls for the same self-denial that the old religion called for, when the word of God spells the Cross, wither away because they have

no root in themselves, because underneath their life is the great ledge? Who put it there? That ledge goes back to what we call the foundation of the world. You and I are not responsible for it—it may stand for a moment as our ancestors. If they were hard people then you and I will be shallow. It seems to me we can see that every day in the history of this land. Men who have devoted all the energy of life to the accumulation of wealth until they have grown as hard as the granite bowlder in a New England pasture; women who have grown as hard as iron in the great struggle for place in society, have begotten shallow children. There is no soil in the lives of those children. If that does not appear in the first or second generation it will in the third—people who are incapable of taking root because of a rocky ledge of heredity that has prevented any depth of soil.

Then, on the other hand, we find a field already pre-empted. The thorns are growing there before the seed is sown. Are we responsible for our environment when we come into the world? No; no more than we are for our heredity. It is a pitiful thing to see, but there are little children in this city to-day who, before they can lisp, are filled with septic fears, who are anxious and alarmed and apprehensive about the demon of microbes. You can see the little line of anxiety drawn between their brows before they have passed out of the years of infancy. They have begun to feel the cares of this life. I ask some one to let me take their little boy or little girl and try and cultivate the soil of their life. They say: "How we should love to do it—what it would be for the little boy or little girl to have the influence of your life upon them (how polite they are!); but unfortunately there is a music lesson or a

dancing lesson or a French lesson; they must take riding lessons and there is no time for their souls." Well, is not that a thorny life? What chance has the seed of the husbandman in such a life as that? And then follows inevitably the deceitfulness of riches. The rich girl at school will find plenty of girls to flatter her. The rich man's son at college will find many a toady to follow him, but they are both deceived. In the next thirty years it will be the boy who is working his way through college to-day, who has no flatterers, who will come to this city and be a leader, in medicine, at the bar, or in the great business ventures of this country. Nothing is more deceptive to the young in the formation of standards than the display of riches, and Jesus knew it ages ago.

There is still the good ground. Some of it brings forth a hundredfold. Some lives are really all that God can ask—I

have known them and so have you. Some are not all, but it is wonderful what they are—I have known them and so have you. Some make a sort of return, we have all known them, too.

There are two things we may say about all this story. One is, not only are groups of men and women to be described as hard and stony and choked, but also every one of us is conscious that his own heart is a field in which perhaps every one of these soils is represented. Part of me is beaten hard by habit, part is shallow from inheritance, part of me is choked by environment, but a little part of the field, thank God, is open to the rain and the sunshine and the wind of God, and some good is to come out of it.

Now, what more than that can we say? "Things are what they are, their consequences will be what they will be,"—then let it go! Well, of course, if that

was what Jesus meant, then His gospel is the gospel of Buddha, the gospel of despair. Others may say as the smallest boy in the Sunday-school said to me last Sunday, when I was speaking to the children about these same words in language more suited to their intelligence. I said, with happy expectation: "And now, children, what are we going to do about it?" and the littlest boy in the Sunday-school said: "Nothin'." You laugh, yes, I laughed, too—it was so different from what I had expected. But we won't laugh long when we think how true that is of many a life, that it does not intend to do anything about it. We sometimes think, as we journey through Northern New England, that the saddest thing we have ever seen is an abandoned farm. There is something sadder still and that is an abandoned soul.

My friends, boys and girls, yes, men

and women, the call to-day is to intensive farming. Do not abandon God's farm, your soul. Recognize the facts of life—say: "Good God, I am growing hard, what a past there is behind me, how awful are the difficulties of my life, what am I to do—what am I to do?" You may plough up the path that is wasting the good pasture. You may dynamite the rock that prevents the depth of soil. You may root up at any cost the thorns that are choking the best growth in you. You may cultivate such good ground as you have until little by little, by the mercy of God, it spreads over the whole field. There is no such thing as a static spiritual field. Over our field the hard path is growing wider or the good ground is extending.

I may not stop now to tell you how this thing is to be done. I know the difficulties, I know that there are limits to the blasting out of the ledge of in-

heritance. But I know that the history of the Christian Church is not a history of Councils or Popes or Archbishops or Bishops or Priests or Monks. It is the history of individual men and women who out of weakness were made strong. We have just read the meaning of it in that first chapter of John, where those men, just such as you and I who are here to-day, because they became the disciples of Jesus Christ entered on the great work of the cultivation of the soil of their own souls. Two things are needful—the will to be better and constant inspection. Declare the first in Confirmation; exercise the second when you come to Communion. God stands ready to give that without which no spiritual harvest can ever be—the rain of His mercy, the sun of His glory, the wind of His inspiration; but even those things will fail unless you and I become laborers together with God.

IX

ELECTION

"It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen."

—Galatians 1 : 15.

This is St. Paul's Day and we must not let it pass without thinking for a little while of one of the greatest men the world has ever seen. First of all he was a great soul, a saint, a mystic wrapped in the glory of God—of that aspect of his character we have lately thought. To-day I would speak of the work of the man and the motive that inspired him. He was a great ecclesiastic—some have gone so far as to call him rather than Jesus the founder of the Church. This he was not, but he was the great master-builder.

So far as I know there are two men only whose influence over the destiny of Europe and America can for a moment be compared with Paul's. The first was Julius Cæsar, who laid the foundation of the Empire and carried the law of Rome from the Tiber to the Thames. And the second, of course, was Napoleon Bonaparte, who destroyed the Holy Roman Empire with the dynamite of the French Revolution, and conquered the world from the Pyramids to the English Channel, from Spain to the Steppes of Russia. But when we ask ourselves how these two supermen did their work we find that each had an instrument ready to his hand. Cæsar had the well-trained Roman legion and Napoleon had the ragged but rugged army of the Revolution. Had the Lord said to Paul at the end of His life, as He did to His first disciples: "When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes, lacked ye anything?" he could have an-

swered as they did: "Nothing." How, then, did he do his work? He tells us, with that wry smile which we may see sometimes when we carefully read his letters: "I did it by the foolishness of preaching." A perfect miracle—by means that to any save Paul would have seemed impossible.

Let us then take one moment to refresh our memory in regard to some of the events of this man's life.

It was at the death of Stephen that I believe his conversion began to work. On the way to Damascus he met his Saviour, and in Damascus he submitted to the yoke. Then to Arabia for thought and contemplation, returning to Jerusalem only to be received with hostile looks, then back to the town where he had been born, for years of obscure labor in Tarsus of Cilicia. There he was discovered by Barnabas and brought to Antioch where he did his great work, and

then with Barnabas to Cyprus and Pamphylia, to Antioch in Pisidia, to Iconium, Derbe, Lystra—back again to Antioch and once more into Asia Minor, trying to go to Ephesus and establish the work there and failing, seeking a way up by Bithynia to the region of the Black Sea, he was hindered; standing at last in Troas where Xerxes had seen his great army cross for the conquest of Greece. There he met a man named Luke, a young doctor from Greece, and that night he had what he called a vision, and heard a voice—the voice, he said, of the man of Macedonia, but you and I say the voice of Europe, the voice of America, the voice of the New World.

What to you and me is the significance of Cæsar's crossing of the Rubicon? What to you and me Napoleon's choice on the eighteenth of Brumaire? But that Paul did not return to Asia but listened to the voice of Europe has made all the

difference in the world to every man and woman and child in this Church and in this land to-day.

And here let us pause and, instead of asking further about the details of this work, seek to learn the secret of the man's power. He says, in writing to the Galatians: "It pleased God to separate me from my mother's womb; he called me by his grace and revealed his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen." What an explanation of life is this: chosen of God, helped by God, inspired by God, giving himself to God, is it any wonder that he did the work he did? But when you and I come to interpret this ancient language into terms of modern speech, we find ourselves somewhat perplexed. It can all be summed up in one word, "Election"—this man had been elected by God for this purpose. But what does election mean to you and me to-day? We sometimes hear

about the weakness of present-day Protestantism. I do not wonder, if it has lost all sense of the meaning of Election, that it cannot do the work of God.

Now I know that some of you to whom I am speaking this morning were very familiar with this word in your youth, and you shrink from it now because of the accompanying shadow of Predestination that always goes with it. And I know that many of you young people who have never had any association at all with this thought of Election are inclined to say it is all outgrown. "It cannot be interpreted into our common speech, it is alien to the enlightened scientific thought of the universe." It may be so, but before we hastily come to this conclusion let me call your attention to something that I believe you will say from your own experience is true, and that is this: that just in proportion as we have lost faith in Election, Predestination has grown to

be a heavy burden. Now Predestination, translated into modern scientific terms, means Heredity. We may not believe in Election but we are awfully oppressed by Heredity. Bearing that in mind let me read to you these strange words taken out of the XVIIth of the XXXIX Articles of Religion: "For curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's Predestination is a most dangerous downfall whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation or into wretchlessness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation." What does all this archaic language mean? Ask not a theologian but a physician who is dealing with neurasthenia and he will tell you that it describes a life so oppressed by the past that it has no power to begin a new life of joy and peace. You may give up the old theological language of Election and Predestination, only to find your-

selves burdened with the problems of Heredity, above which the will is not able to lift us.

Now what we need to remember is this: that while it is perfectly true, as we are all saying day by day: "The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation" (that is the law of Heredity), we forget the corresponding law: "And show mercy unto thousands of generations of them that love me and keep my commandments." There is the revelation of God's perpetual help to overcome the inevitable law of spiritual gravitation that drags us down.

And now let us make this, if we may, a little clearer to ourselves. "It pleased God to separate me from my mother's womb, and call me by his grace." Has anything of that sort come to you and me? Well, do not try to begin at the beginning, but begin at the end and work

backward and let us see what has happened. Every one of us has been separated from the past life not merely physically but spiritually. Some of you men and women who are here this morning are older to-day than father or mother was when he or she died. In other words, there has come to you somehow a better physical constitution than either your father or your mother had. You have been separated from that old physical life by being shown how to modify your constitutional tendency so that you have outlived father or mother. Almost every one within the sound of my voice this morning has had a better opportunity for education than came to the previous generation. You have been separated from the intellectual life of the generation that preceded yours. Where your father had one dollar of income you have a hundred —you have been separated from the economic poverty of the past. Where your

mother had one opportunity for social relaxation you have more than you can employ—you have been separated from the meagre social life of the past. Where your father and mother were hemmed in by the narrow bounds of their religious life you have come in to the liberty of the sons of God—you have been separated from the old religious life. Now these are not theories, they are facts—facts that every one of you here can prove true by his own experience. Now what I ask you is this: I have reminded you of the facts, tell me what is your judgment on those facts. What does it mean that you are to-day what you are, rather than what naturally you would have been?

One man says: "I admit the facts, but all is the result of accident." Another man says: "I admit the facts, but I am a self-made man; it is due to my indomitable will. I am what I am because I made myself what I am." And another

one says: "I don't know anything about it, and I don't care to know anything about it, and I don't think anybody else knows anything about it." Let us ask ourselves, then, what effect these different judgments on life produce in character. Why, if I say I am what I am merely by accident, then you know that I shall become a foolish, careless, inefficient person, my life will have no more significance than I attribute to it. If I boast that I have made myself what I am, if my neighbors do not laugh at my handiwork, then I shall become proud and vulgar and mean. If I do not care and simply drift over the changes of the past without expressing any opinion as to the past or future, then I become dull and useless to mankind. For what happens? This happens: you and I who thus judge of life declare ourselves to be the *termini* of the great evolution of life—it ends with you and me, and all the great mystery is explained when

men see you and me! What does that mean? It means you are blocking the way of the higher life, you have become as the slag of the smelting furnace, the chaff of the harvest floor, the refuse of the great streets, for he and he alone becomes not the end but the means to higher and better life, greater human happiness, greater human enlightenment, greater human joy and peace who, looking back over life says: "It pleased God to separate me from my mother's womb, to call me by his grace and to reveal his Son in me." Such a man knows that if the modern equivalent of Predestination is Heredity, no less is Privilege the modern equivalent of Election.

So Paul said the purpose was to: "Reveal his Son in me." That is what it all means, that is what God wishes to do, that is what God has done. It was no vague religious expression, it was the simple statement of the man's deepest

conviction, that it was the will of God that he should in some way resemble Jesus Christ. God wished Jesus Christ to be seen in him. When he knew that the way was plain, it meant that he must give his life to preach Him among the heathen. For to reveal Jesus Christ is to reveal not a life that has received that it may hold, but a life that has received that it may give. The only man who is damned in the Gospel story is the man who in his "lifetime received good things"—and kept them!

In the Epistle to the Romans Paul writes to his friends: "I intend to come to Rome and then I will pass on to Spain." Spain was as far from Ephesus as Alaska is from New York, and farther, and the reason he said: "I will go to Spain," was that Spain was the utmost bound of the habitable world. There Paul must go to preach the good news that God had given to him, that every

child of man is the child of the living God. "When I have reached you I will go to Spain."

Whether he ever went to Spain or not we do not know. We used to be told that he landed at Barcelona and climbed the plateau of Catalonia. We used to be told that he landed at Marseilles and went over that road that some of you have flown over in your motors. Vienne, Arles, Avignon, Lyons, Paris—yes, over the English Channel till he came to the little huts that now make Canterbury, to the mud hovels that now make London, to the city in the north where Constantine was to be born—York. "No," the scholar says; "this is not history, this is myth." Likely that is true; but myth is the poetic expression of plain prose truth, and this is: that whether Paul ever saw Spain or Gaul or Britain or not, his spirit went to the utmost bounds of the habitable world. He did indeed travel

across France and make his influence felt in England. He came across in the *Mayflower*, he landed on the bleak New England shore, he touched at this Dutch colony, he went to the Western Reserve, he passed over the Alleghany Mountains, he crossed the Mississippi, he trekked over the great American desert, he came to the gardens of California and to the glaciers of Alaska. To-day he is in Japan and China and the Philippines, and in the far-off islands of the Southern Sea. "It pleased God to separate me from my mother's womb, and call me by his grace, and to reveal his Son in me that I might preach Him among the heathen."

To justify foreign missions is like attempting to justify the Evolution of life. It is inevitable, it will go on whether you and I co-operate or not. This impulse has been felt by men who had health, and they have built hospitals to give health to others; by those who had education,

they have endowed schools and colleges; by women who had refinement, and they gave it to their downtrodden sisters. Those who have received Christ feel that they must make His glory known upon earth; His saving health among all nations. The Predestination of the heathen, by heredity, by sickness, ignorance, brutality, and fear is being counteracted by the Election of privilege. "Where sin did abound grace did much more abound."

Only if we co-operate can we have the right understanding of the significance of life. "It pleased God," that is, for reasons that I cannot understand, I have been separated and you have been separated, while all those millions in Africa, in India, in China, in Japan, in the islands of the sea, while all those millions are grovelling in fear before the powers of this universe, or living in apathetic indifference to spiritual things, we have been

separated into the freedom of the children of God. "It pleased God," that is, for some reason that I cannot understand, that I and those to whom I speak have been separated from the life of suffering and poverty that now afflicts thousands of our brothers and sisters in this very city in which we live. "It pleased God," that is, for some reason that I do not understand, to separate you and me and bring us into a life of larger enlightenment through education, to bring us into a sweeter and lovelier life of social refinement, to give us the knowledge of his Son.

Now what is it all for? Is it because I am a favorite, you are the favorites of God who, like a doting father, gives the child everything it wants without any regard to the influence upon its character? Not at all; all this Election which you and I enjoy has a purpose—that in us something of Jesus' life might appear, and when that does appear there can be no

line drawn beyond which we will not go. We must go, for wherever there is a child of man there is a child of God.

The ruin of life is to receive good things and keep them; the glory of life is like the glory of Niagara, where not one drop of water will be held back—where every drop of water adds to the beauty and power of the great cataract. Let the water be held back and the land will be destroyed, let it go over the fall in perfect faith and it will become the glory and the power of the land. So may it be with you and me—hold back your life and you lose it, give your life and He who gave it will receive it.

X

THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE

"Greet the church that is in their house."
—Romans 16 : 5.

Aquila and his wife Priscilla were the wandering Jews of the apostolic days. They had lived in Rome till the decree of the Emperor Claudius banished them. Then they settled in Corinth, and when Paul came there he boarded with them. Later they removed to Ephesus, and it was in their house that the little company of Christians gathered. Now they have returned to Rome, and it is to the church in their house that Paul sends the greetings in our text.

When we think of the countless churches in Rome to-day, of St. John Lateran and of St. Peter's the mother church of the

Western world, we have an illustration of the parable of the mustard seed. How small the beginning and how great the growth! But this very greatness is confusing. The very idea of the Church has been affected by it. The Church seems to consist of Popes and Cardinals, of Bishops and dignitaries of various sorts. The mayors of the palace have usurped the place of the king! And even in the less elaborate Protestant Churches the first significance of the Church has been obscured. We give the house the name of the family—we speak of St. Bartholomew's Church and there comes to mind this beloved building with its stately façade, its glorious doors, its golden chancel, its inspiring "Christ in Glory." We hear the roll of the great organ, we listen to the uplifting anthem, we remember, perhaps, some word of exhortation or rebuke or comfort—and forget the *Church* that is in this house—the

blessed company of faithful people. You are the Church in this house, and it is to you I bring to-day my greetings.

Ten years ago to-day I became your Rector, "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling." I came hoping for a useful ministry but with no expectation of happiness. I have had great happiness, and I hope I have done some good.

My first word of greeting then must be one of sincere gratitude to my Bishop for unshaken support and friendship—so chary of advice, so willing to listen and to counsel. To the Wardens and Vestry for co-operation in every good work, unmarred by self-will or slackness. To those good men and women who have carried on the various activities of the Parish, welcoming me when I came among them; uncomplaining when it might seem they were forgotten. To my brethren of the Clergy who have given me loyal support, to all my fellow work-

ers in the Parish, to the teachers in the Sunday-school, who have submitted to hard conditions in their zeal for the good work. To my friend the Choirmaster and to all who under his direction have made the music of the Church the glory of our services. And to the Rector's secretary, who has been hands and eyes and memory to me. Last, but not least, to the children who have given me their loving friendship. His heart would be hard who did not rejoice to have a little child—born long after he began his ministry here—break away from his nurse in the street, and calling loudly on him by name (to the amusement of the passers-by), demand with shining eyes: "What do you think I've got at home?" and to the futile suggestion that it might be a monkey or a bunny, rapturously exclaim: "A baby sister!" To have a little child feel that such a confidence could be made is cause for thankfulness to any minister.

I should not be justified in telling such a simple tale as that and others like it were it not that I feel strongly and would have you feel the truth expressed in the sententious words of the old Hebrew Midrash: "Where there are no little ones, there no disciples; and where no disciples, there no sages; and where no sages, there no elders; where no elders, there no prophets; and where no prophets, there does God not cause His Shekhinah (*i. e.*, His glory) to rest."

Thus much of the past and of myself you will allow me to say, and more I will not ask, though before I leave the past I will recall some statistics which, if they have no spiritual significance, may serve to show something of the extent of your parochial activity.

In the past ten years there have been 1,520 baptisms, 1,254 persons confirmed, 940 marriages, and 849 burials. For all purposes there has been expended the

sum of about $2,587,800. These statistics are given not for boasting but to obtain something by which to measure the present prosperity of the parish, not in comparison with the past but with the anticipated future. I might say in passing that I think the most significant thing in this large gift is that (speaking roughly) there has been used for the support of the Parish Church less than $600,000, while about $2,000,000 has been given away.

If the Church be not the building but the people, the future will be dependent, as the past has been, upon the love of and the faith in and the hope for the institution which is the outward sign—the body—of spiritual life.

Ten years from now some other man will stand in this place. If he finds a Church weaker than this is to-day he will seek for a reason. Some of you who are here will tell him this: "When the former

Rector asked us to build a Chapel, which among other things would serve as a children's Church, there was an immediate and generous response, and the result justified his expectation. There were special services for the children, the Sunday-school for the children of the congregation steadily increased in size, and they felt that the Church was theirs, and they began to love it. The organization of the Junior Auxiliary brought the children together and impressed upon them the privilege and duty of extending the Kingdom of God. The children began to believe in the Church, and the pastoral ministration to children, to a certain extent by the Rector, but still more by the Assistant Minister, made the children feel that the Church believed in them, and a hope of usefulness arose in them."

But if your new Rector then asks: "Why, then, is the Parish not in the flourishing state it was ten years ago?"

you will not know what to answer. I will try to answer for you. I will leave the form of "imaginary conversation" with which you are perhaps too familiar, and deal in a plain way with some of the parochial problems that already exist, and will grow more intricate in the future. As I look back over the past ten years it almost seems as if we were living in another city, and these changes will not grow less as time goes on.

Consider then some of the effects upon our Church that physical change in the city has produced.

Rents have increased enormously as land has become valuable for business purposes, and with enhanced value have come heavier taxes. As a consequence great numbers of young married people who certainly twenty and perhaps even ten years ago would have begun home-making in the city have planted their homes in the surrounding counties. Here

we may rejoice that the country Church is coming into its own. Your sons and daughters are supporting and helping those Churches, but that means financial weakness for us.

That would not be so serious if it stood alone, but the social revolution that has come in the last twenty years, and grows every year wider, must profoundly affect the usefulness of city Churches. The rise of Park Avenue, destined to be one of the most imposing streets in the world, is a significant sign of the times. Here we have an avenue of apartment houses, occupied but a few months in the year because many of the occupants have country houses. We may retain those who have association with this Church, but when they go we cannot expect people who come to town for the season to support two Churches.

Then consider the hundreds of people living in the great hotels. Some of them

lock their door, leave the key in the office, and go to Egypt because there is a sudden cold snap! They may attend a Church with more or less regularity, but they do not feel called upon to support it.

I ask myself, then, when death removes those who for years have loved this Church, what is to become of it? Placed as it is, it need never lack a congregation. That is shown by the crowds who gather here every Sunday afternoon. Very few of them are known to me, very few have any sense of responsibility for the support of the Church, not many have the means to support the Church. We are drawing near, then, to a time when St. Bartholomew's will have a glorious opportunity to minister to people of small means, and will be unable to take advantage of it. No matter how attractive, how strong, how good the leader of the congregation may be, he cannot make this Parish what it has been to the city

and to the country unless there is prepared now an institution greater than any individual. What Napoleon said of nations is true of Churches: "Men are impotent to assure the future: institutions alone fix the destinies of Nations."

There are three ways of meeting this situation, and each of them has the approval of good and wise men. The first says: "We must submit to the inevitable. St. Bartholomew's has had a useful, and at times brilliant, life of eighty years. It may continue for twenty years more, not quite so vigorously, perhaps, but honorably, and then, when it has lived out the century, let it cease, and let another Church elsewhere do the work that it has done. This is sad, but it is sensible."

Another says: "We need not contemplate dissolution. Do again what we have done before. Sell this Church and move to another part of the city, in the

midst of a population which can support it." But where? A Church in our communion is not free to sell its property and move where it will. It must have the consent of the ecclesiastical authority.* It will ask whither we intend to move. If it be found the place we choose is already near a little Church that for years has been waiting for the population we now want, the answer may be: "The unearned increment belongs to the man who is on the ground." If that same authority suggest that we undertake mission work in the Bronx, we should then face the same problem we have here, with the loss of association, prestige, and with lessened opportunity.

But even if that difficulty were overcome there are others. To move from this site means that the Parish House would be far from its base of supplies, and it would be difficult to find teachers

* The Bishop and the Standing Committee.

and workers willing to come a long distance.

But there is another reason which, if it does not appeal to all to whom I speak, nevertheless must be taken into consideration. I mean the change of public opinion in regard to the duty of the Churches to the city. Every one will recall the protest of the community when a few years ago it was decided to close St. John's Chapel. I know too little of the facts to express an opinion as to the expediency of that decision, but if public opinion was mistaken in that particular instance, it is certainly the conviction of the community that a Church to do its best work must minister to congregations that cannot support it. That has been the glory of the Roman Catholic Church. That has caused the city to rejoice in the determination of the Brick Church to refuse the great price its property would bring, and remain in the new centre of

the business world as Trinity Church and St. Paul's Chapel have done down-town. If St. Bartholomew's had been transformed from a parish to a metropolitan Church by me, had it been made known all over the land during my ministry, I should be embarrassed in urging the expectation of the country that we will not fail in the more difficult but no less important work that will open before it in the future.

How can that be done? How can this Church be kept here near to the Parish House, at the door of the Great Terminal, in the midst of the great hotels, near an express station of the old and new subways, at the end of the new avenue of apartments? Only by great gifts from those who love it and believe in the type of religion and churchmanship for which it stands. The day when a Church can be supported as a club, by entrance fees and annual dues, is passing away. If

disease is to be cured and life preserved there must be great hospitals independent of private patients. If the higher education is to flourish great universities must be endowed. We say of this man: "He did not have to work his way through college, his father could pay his way." No one of you paid your way in college. The richest man's son was a charity scholar! All enjoyed the benefactions of men who have given sums great and small for the perpetuation of their Alma Mater. So it must be with the Church.

I have felt this ever since I came here, but I have taken no step toward its accomplishment, waiting till the laity should express themselves. This they have now done. On November 7th last, the Vestry, without any suggestion from me, passed the following resolution:

"*Resolved:* That in the opinion of the Vestry steps should be immediately taken to secure an endowment fund for the

benefit of St. Bartholomew's Church, and that the Rector be requested to appoint a committee of five with power to add to their number from outside the Vestry to carry this Resolution into effect."

In compliance with that Resolution the Rector appointed a committee* who met to consider this matter, and it is at their request that I bring it before you at this time. That you may come to a right judgment, it is necessary that you should know what is needed, and how it is suggested the endowment should be raised.

Leaving aside from our consideration the Clinic and Pawling, I would remind you that the current expenses of this Church, including repairs, are about $60,000 a year, and that, as you know, at least $20,000 a year must be contributed by the congregation for the Parish House.

* Mr. Henry Lewis Morris, Mr. William D. Sloane, Dr. E. R. L. Gould, Mr. James W. Lane, and Mr. Alvin W. Krech.

An income of $80,000 requires an endowment of $2,000,000. Great as that is it is not beyond the powers of this congregation. A part might be given by large and immediate gifts. A part could be paid in five annual payments, following the successful plan of Yale. A part could be provided by bequests to be paid when you are dead.

There is a slang saying that is sometimes used in business; when a suggestion is made to a man to buy or sell, he answers: "I don't see it." It has a deeper significance than he knows. If we *saw*, if we had a vision, we should act.

A part of the vision is so near that all must see it. The completion of the Panama Canal will demand a port at this city the greatest in the world. That will surely come. It seems not unlikely that some day the whole island, from the Battery to Spuyten Duyvil, will be one great market and workshop. The rich

will be pushed away and we shall have a great population of working people, men and women, who must live near their work. If the Protestant Church follows the rich the city will be left to the Catholic Church and the Synagogue. If we believed that they could minister to the deepest religious needs of the community we should not attempt to rival them. They cannot. An ever-increasing number of Catholics and Jews are abandoning the religion of their childhood, and unless there is a Church which can be their friend and leader they will revert to heathenism. If we owe anything to the city, if we owe anything to this Church, let us do what we can to give the city the perpetual ministration of the Church. Every one will admit that the closing of the Parish House would be a calamity that Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants in this city would deplore. But not only in this city—all over the

country the loss would be felt. Yes, even in Europe its example has been recognized. Émile Levasseur, sometime Rector of the University of Paris, in his "Impressions of America," refers to your Parish House as the most notable example of the new impulse for the betterment of mankind that the Church has ever shown. Some may think that the Parish House can continue its beneficent work should this Church wither away. No longer than the oak would last after the root had died—no longer than the body would continue when the soul had fled! The Spirit of Christ made that work possible, and the Spirit of Christ alone will keep it alive. If we would not have it become a mere Humanitarian Institution, if we would have it the right hand of the Church—the Church must be kept alive.

In the years to come there will be in this city great hospitals, built and en-

dowed by those who, "not ignorant of misery, have learned to succor others." Great museums for Art, built and endowed by those who have been wooed and won by the spirit of beauty. Great universities endowed by men filled with a love of learning. Everything that can minister to the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life will be here. Can we be content "to go hence and be no more seen," and leave the city of our love and of our pride to hear no more, or only as a faint whisper: "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever?" I know you too well (I know you better than you know yourselves!) to doubt your answer—you will provide for the Church in *this* house—and the future will be more glorious than the past.

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